

# Lake Michigan Chinook Stocking Cuts MCBA Survey

Saturday, September 10, 2016

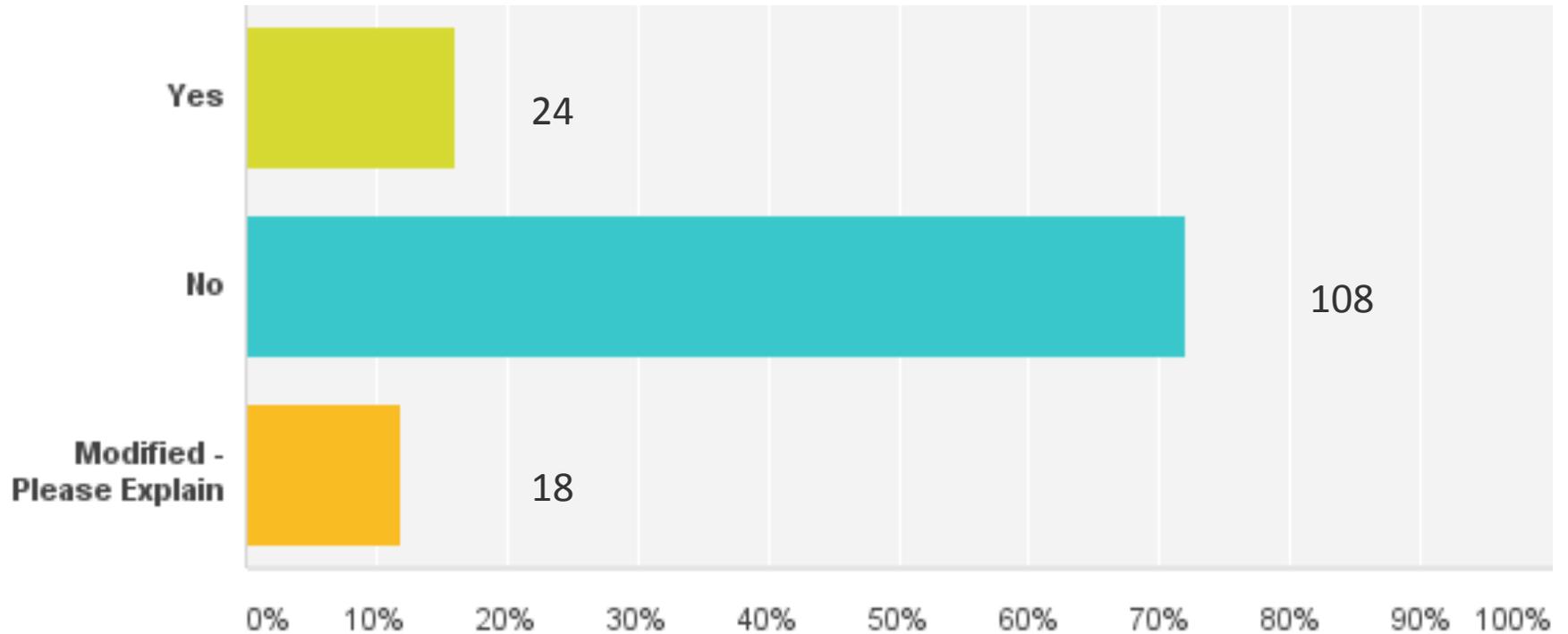
# 151

**Total Responses**

Date Created: Friday, September 02, 2016

# Q1: Do you as a MCBA Captain support the proposed Chinook salmon cut by MDNR fisheries, from approx. 1.8 million fish to approx. 800,000 fish in 2017 for Lake Michigan?

Answered: 150 Skipped: 1



## Question 1 Page 1. modified response

1. No, I do not support the cuts this large, why? I see a lot of bait. The fish are full and healthy. Over all fish numbers are down but fish are larger. For 2017 would like to see a 25% cut in Chinook and an increase in steelhead
2. Answer is No. There is a lot of young alewife bait and the lake can handle the same stocking as past years.
3. No more cuts at this time! There are lots of alewife and several year classes. Fish are healthier than ever and large. Most species have large to small alewife. Cuts should be made to compensate by cutting Lake Trout which live longer, are less desirable and are less attractive to charter customers. Spawning fish need to be protected if they think we should rely on natural reproduction. The DNR doesn't feel this is necessary for some stupid reason but they protect every other species. Also quit planning muskies in all the drown river mouths along west Michigan that nobody gives a damn about. They also eat alewife and shad and all the trout and salmon species. At I might add a tremendous cost way over and above any salmonid species!!!!

## Question 1 Page 2. modified response

4. I believe there needs to be some cuts but also cut back on the Lake Trout planting, this would help the bait fish recovery in a shorter time frame.
5. Status quo is best option
6. You're asking me. All I know is I have seen no difference in the amount of bait fish marked in a normal year. No sign of starving fish. And in fact huge fish have been caught.
7. Only if the lake trout plant is reduced to 800k. Even though alewife consumed by LT is reported to be 40% of their diet, the huge difference in the plant numbers might equal- al the number of alewives consumed by CS. How many young CS are consumed by LT?
8. Yes, if this is what needs to be done.
9. It doesn't matter the membership doesn't all agree with the biology. If the majority of the membership agrees with the cuts we might lose members. If the biology is correct and we don't make cuts the fishery will suffer. I support the biology but all members must be united. There is too much at stake to have a divided membership.

## Question 1 Page 3. modified response

10. I support the cut if we truly have a shortage of Alewife across the lake. I know-northern Lake Michigan seems to have less bait then it once did.
11. they need to find a way to stock more bait fish for kings
12. There's a lot of bait out there
13. The DNR is so concerned about our alewives but plants lake trout by the millions! Can we not see an agenda here with the Mi DNR. I hope the facts get out there, lake trout are eating alewives
14. I am not fully up to date with the information
15. I see enough bait fish
16. proposal g passed. for biologist to regulate wildlife.. Why if we feel the scientsts should manage wolves, should we differ just because it affects our pocketbooks. I support the fisheries biologists
17. 3 fish bag limit, increase steelhead stocking, cut chinook by 40%
18. I would rather see less Lake trout planted and more Chinook but I want what is best for the overall sustainability of the fishery

## Q2 What Lake(s) and Port(s) do you fish?

Answered: 150 Skipped: 1

#	Responses
1	Escanaba
2	Lake Michigan, Manistee
3	Michigan / Frankfort
4	Lk mich port of Frankfort
5	Lake Michigan Port Of Saugatucki
6	Saugatuck
7	grand haven mi
8	Grand Haven
9	St.Joseph, Mi
10	Grand Haven
11	michigan. Frankfort-Elberta
12	Lake Michigan, Ludington
13	Whitehall & grand haven
14	Lake Michigan St joseph & Frankfort
15	Lake Huron, Harbor Beach
16	Grand haven
17	huron/St. Ignace & Mackinac Island
18	Lake Huron. Don't make the same mistake!!
19	Holland, Lake Michigan. Saginaw Bay Lake Huron, Bay City
20	Huron fort Drummond marine
21	Pentwater Lake Michigan
22	Ludington
23	lake michigan, St joe, ludington, manistee, frankfort
24	Linwood and the Saginaw Bay and Lake Michigan out of Manistee.

25	lake michigan/new buffalo port
26	Lake Michigan St. Joe
27	Lake Huron, Saginaw Bay and Lake Michigan
28	Ludington
29	Lake Michigan, Manistee and Onekama
30	Lake Michigan, Holland
31	Mich. Traverse City
32	Manistee and will be in the Saginaw Bay
33	Michigan / ludington
34	Lake Michigan
35	GH
36	Lake Michigan- Holland
37	lake michigan charlevoix, bay harbor
38	Lake Michigan, Grand Traverse Bay, Greilickville
39	Frankfort. lake Michigan
40	Huron Au Gres
41	Michigan, Ludington
42	petoskey
43	Lake Michigan, Ludington
44	Michigan traverse ciru
45	Lake St Clair and Detroit river
46	Huron Michigam, bay city, Frankfort
47	Lake Michigan out of St. Joseph
48	Michigan, Frankfort
49	Michigan City St Joesph Holland Grand Haven
50	Manistee
51	Lake Huron - Oscoda
52	I'm a Lake Huron captain who witnessed first hand the collapse of a once great fishery.
53	Michigan, Manistee st joeseph

54	Lake Huron, Linwood
55	Manistee and Pentwater
56	Frankfort Lake Michigan the worst I've seen it in 30 years
57	Lake Michigan
58	Traverse City
59	Lake Michigan St. Joseph Mi
60	Saginaw bay Linwood / lake michigan Manistee
61	Lake Michigan Frankfort
62	south haven
63	Leland
64	Erie, Toledo Beach, Michigan, Elk Rapids, Frankfort
65	Traverse city. Oscoda
66	Manistee - Lake Michigan
67	Lake Michigan, port of Ludington from Little point Sable to almost Manistee
68	Huron Oscoda & Harrisville occasionally. Linwood walleye mostly.
69	St Joseph. Lake Michigan
70	Lake Michigan Lake Erie
71	Lake Michigan, Muskegon
72	Michigan - Frankfort
73	Lake Michigan , Manistee.
74	Ludington
75	Frankfort
76	lake michigan, manistee
77	Lake Michigan
78	Frankfort
79	Glen Arbor/Leland, Lake Michigan
80	Frankfort, Lake Michigan, Au Gres, Huron
81	Lake Michigan Ludington
82	Erie

83	Lake Superior Grand Marais
84	Lake Michigan.....Manistee
85	Lake Michigan, Traverse city and Frankfort
86	white lake on west of mi.
87	Michigan. Ludington
88	lake michigan/grand haven
89	Grand haven
90	Lake Michigan, Grand Haven
91	Port of Saugatuck, Michigan, Lake Michigan
92	Traverse City, Lake Michigan
93	new buffalo mi ; lake mich
94	Lake Michigan; Ludington
95	St Joseph
96	Lake michigan,glen arbor
97	Erie, Michigan and Huron
98	Michigan Manistee
99	Lake Michigan/Ludington
100	Grand Haven
101	Lake Huron , Lexington, port Sanilac
102	Lake Huron Oscoda
103	St Joseph
104	Lake Michigan, port of Manistique port of Escanaba port of Fairport
105	Manistee Au Gres
106	Manistee
107	Lake Erie, St Clair
108	Frankfort, Lake Michigan
109	Michigan
110	Grand haven holland muskegon
111	Lake Michigan, Holland

112	Petoskey, Charlovoix. Lake michigan.
113	Michigan port of Manistee
114	Lake Michigan Ludington
115	Lake Erie and Lake Michigan
116	frankfort
117	Lake Michigan. Onekama
118	St. Joseph
119	michigan
120	St. Joe
121	Ludington
122	Lake Michigan/Frankfort
123	Leland
124	Lake Michigan, Ludington
125	Lake Erie toledo Beach and Manistee Lake michigan
126	Lake michigan, frankfort and manistee
127	Ludington
128	Lake Michigan Saugatuck
129	Lake Michan Leland
130	Lake Michigan .....port of Frankfort ,MI.
131	Lake michigan Ludington
132	Glen Arbor
133	Leland
134	Holland
135	Lake mich. St Joseph mi
136	lake erie
137	Lake MI. Muskegon
138	Michigan, Ludington- Pentwater- Manistee
139	Michigan; Bay Harbor, Charlevoix, Mackinaw City
140	Grand haven. Mi

141	Ludington
142	Muskegon
143	Lake Michigan - whitehall
144	Lake Michigan / Holland
145	Grand Haven, Muskegon, Ludington, St. Joe
146	Lake Michigan Grand Haven
147	Muskegon
148	Northern Lake Huron /Mackinac Island
149	Huron/linwood, Michigan, manistee
150	Lake Michigan, Ludington

### Q3 What is your opinion on the current state of the Chinook fishery in Lake Michigan ? Brief reply (under a paragraph)

Answered: 145 Skipped: 6

#	Responses
1	Stop the lake trout nobody wants them
2	If we continue down this path I will not have a charter fishing business. How about a subsidy to licensed captains the way the Ag market receives?
3	In Frankfort the chinook fishing is virtually no existent .
4	Very low numbers now don't need anymore cuts see how things go now!
5	Then we Need more coho and steelhead
6	See above. We are seeing reduced stocking of Lake Trout and King Salmon with no discussion of increased stockings of Steelhead and Coho. The MDNR is attempting to save Lake Michigan from the same fate as Lake Huron; however, we are seeing great signs of recovery already. Best Alewife spawning class 'ever' last year. We see it on our sounders. The MDNR is knee jerk responding to insure the Lake is successful. Reducing all stockings at this time is not necessary. If they continue on this path, we will have alewives dead on the beach again. Reduced income from vacationers for all of us - Hotels, Restaurants, Charter Captains, etc.
7	we are in big trouble here. are you really willing to throw this fishery away, if so then we will leave as well, good luck with that. nobody comes here to spend \$600 to catch lake trout and i mean nobody.
8	I think I have already made myself clear. We need Kings not trout and muskies to keep the economy healthy!!
9	The chinook fishery is way down. I am seeing more bait and fish with bait in them. We are seeing larger fish. I think stocking should not be cut but kept at a status quo for another year of evaluation.
10	Poor. Frankfort port has the least Chinook I have seen in the 15 years s I have been fishing this port. The few fish we have been catching are fat and healthy. Obviously getting bait fish somewhere.
11	We have seen a drastic decline in catch rates for kings the last 3 seasons. My business is down as a result. Negative press stating the decline of kings has not helped either.
12	It will never be like the past, fishing an catches. Limits should cut to help stocks for the future. I think 3 fish for anyone is plenty .We as a group need to help.
13	Poor at Frankfort-So so at St. Joseph
14	We have gone through the loss of Salmon on Lake Huron. I wish we would have gotten a reduction in plants earlier. I feel it might have saved our fishery if we had realized the number of natural Salmon that were in the lake. The reduction in plants would have helped! We can see the same thing we went through happening on Lake Michigan and it hurts that they did not learn from our mistake in continuing the plants.
15	Fishing is now a process of catching 2-5 fish per trip. Gone are the days of 15-20 fish trips. If we want more fish, we have to focus on producing more bait fish. Very simple equation. If the fishery is going to die, let's not make it a slow death.

16	Don't know as I do not fish there.
17	Prey and predators have to be in proper ratio for both to survive. Alewife are at historic lows. Cut salmon plants or your fishery goes the way of Lake Huron!
18	I believe that the fishery is decent, but at the same time, the same signs we saw on Lake Huron are beginning to show. I support the DNR's efforts to stay on top of this issue as long as they increase the plants when baitfish respond to the cuts and try to strike a balance.
19	Slowing down
20	I think they should plant the same amount as last year and see how next year goes
21	Bad
22	Salmon Fishing is better in Wisconsin and Illinois
23	Very difficult to catch enough fish to make my customers happy and want to pay 600 dollars to do it.
24	not enough kings being caught per trip
25	With the current stockings it seems to be working. The weights really went up this year. Not just Chinooks but Lt's Steelhead, Coho's also!
26	The fish that are being caught are very healthy,
27	Cut trout add chinook
28	Dismal at best!
29	Chinook fishery is dwindling but with these stocking cuts, it's better to be safe than sorry. Let the prey biomass increase for a few years before increasing Chinook stocking again. Focus on other species that don't solely feed on Alewives. Just because captains are seeing bait in a small area doesn't mean that bait levels have taken a dramatic increase. Let the Alewives repopulate for a few years so that the young of the year alewives have a chance to reach spawning age.
30	Hearing that Wisc. Is have good year as there are lots of alewives on that side. Why. not here?
31	We are catching one third of the Kings we used to. All ready I'm seeing charter boats going out of business because of the lack of Kings. Why not plant fish to support the bait fish like Walleye. DNR reports that the walleye population exploded in the Saginaw Bay because of the bait fish decline. Plant walleye and open the season up year round,. Plant other fish that kings feed on. There approach is "lets do less work"
32	There was no spring salmon fish fishery , I've had 3 trips in August with NO fish for the customers . Two of the trips we never moved a rod . Makes you really look good to your customers , don't have to worry about them coming back !
33	Chartering is going to be a thing of the past. You will not be able to make a living on the south end of the lake. Mid and upper Michigan will survive. NO ONE looks out for the South End.
34	Seems to be ok. Why are Cohos not mentioned in GH plantings. Are they (Cohos) still being planted in Lansing? WHY? Political reasons?
35	The fish we caught this year were very healthy with many different forms of bait(gizzard shad, alewives, perch, gobies, etc). it will be interesting to see the reports of the 2017 bait fish reports. I think we will find more than anticipated. I think we should maintain the current planting level until after we get the 2017 bait fish report.

36	this year and last was the worst salmon fishing ive had out of charlevoix in many years. i think the current reduction of salmon stocks needs more time to see a benefit in forage base population. what is the reason for another reduction? thank you capt russell ward
37	The reduction of salmon has been devastating to our charter fishing industry.
38	Obviusly not what it used to be. But enough to make it viable to fish.
39	Fish are migrating, going to food.
40	Very few fish...90%+ are natural being caught... These good looking fish support the tourism and sport fishing to the states....terminate the lake trout plants for a time period...there is more lake trout mouths in the lake then any other fish, plus they live the longest...!
41	Very poor in north
42	Very poor fishing
43	Healthier fish then in the past
44	I know the fishery has declined. I fished lake Huron before the decline there then went to lake MI for 10 years but haven't been the last 3 seasons because it seemed MI was headed the direction that Huron did.
45	Fishing for the 2016 season has been steady after a few years of below average numbers and size. The larger numbers of kings and bigger size leads me to believe they are eating well and will continue to do so of stocking numbers are NOT decreased.
46	Chinook fishery is very poor here do to the cut backs we do see large fish now as a result of the few kings having enough to eat because of the cut backs
47	Weak, We have to make an effort to improve the population of fish. Michigan is not leading the effort and our sportsmen are paying the price for it. I just want to have a healthy population and we are not there.
48	There are currently not enough kings to effect the the forage base population. Proof look at river return counts.
49	I believe due to the size of the fish and the 2015 alewife survival that the fishery is healthy at this must reduced level. If cuts are necessary they should primarily target Lake Trout
50	I don't fish it but if they are going to cut the kings we need a replacement for the fishermen to target Atlantic's-Cohos whatever works best but nothing at all is NOT THE ANSWER. Thank-you. Capt. Dave
51	It's down by all reports as is the alewife population which supports it. It's well documented salmon prefer alewife over all other prey. If the prey base collapses, as it did in Lake Huron, it's reasonable to predict the same consequences for Lake Michigan.
52	Dismal, lots of bait..no fish. Stock more Chinook and cut the lake trout plants.
53	Fish look healthy, must have plenty to eat
54	I do believe something needs to change but that drastic of a cut is insane
55	The worst I have seen it in 30 years

56	Numbers are down. Healthy fish being caught.
57	I believe the chinook fishery this year is just fine. I believe we have a great balance of lake trout and salmon up north here. I also believe that the DNR needs to do a much better job on bait surveys. If you have 39" king salmon that weigh 14-16 pounds you have a bait problem. When you have 39" salmon that weigh 17-19 pounds you don't have a problem. And all the kings I've been catching are 18 plus. I do not think we need to increase the plant though. Let's keep it here for a year or so and then re look at it.
58	Very poor. Don't believe there is any natural Reproduction
59	Not good at least this the fish were on the bigger side. Only averaged 4 -8 fish per trip.
60	I believe that more time and research should be allowed before taking such drastic measures. The current state of the fishery is hurting the economies of the coastal communities and may not be necessary as I am seeing lots of healthy alewives. They are larger than I have seen in many years. Smelt are also on the rebound. Thanks. Captain Andy Odette Intimidator Sportfishing Charters Frankfort
61	Worse year ever
62	There is not enough bait in the lake to support the Chinook fishery. There is not enough food at the low end of the food web to support many of the fisheries in the lake.
63	The fishery is down but still fishable numbers. Any further decline will start to make charter fishing very difficult on Lake Michigan for salmon.
64	Early signs of chinook crash like what happened in Lake Huron
65	Poor to say the least. More boats are moored than underway during fishing prime time. Did not purchase any tackle this year given the lack of fish.
66	Salmon are very healthy ... biggest in years... catch numbers are tough and makes it appear that we do not want any less salmon planted. There appears to be enough bait... we are marking it and finding lots of alewives in stomachs of ALL SPECIES ! Hopefully this survey is for only captains that fish Lake Michigan
67	Fish in lake, west side. Is there really a bait shortage? Maybe bait relocation?
68	If cuts must be made then do it evenly at all ports not favoring some over others.
69	Don't KNOW. I would like more studies of the current condition of the Chinook Fishery. And how come Wisconsin has such a good supply of fish?
70	The state of the Chinook fishery poor. And with continued cuts will all but disappeared. The 1.8 million plants is missing leading with the poor survival rate of the stocked fish.
71	It is mainly a wild Chinook fishery so cutting the Chinook is a mood point because they are a small part of our creel. Lake trout being abundant are taking more alewife out of the system than Chinook at this time.
72	I feel that the lake can never become what it once was. With all the 200 plus invasive species. I fished from South Haven to Frankfort this year and saw bait fish in all ports. To say the bait fish is gone is ridiculous! I feel that the reduction of the past plants has given us less in our catches but larger fish. As a fisherman I like the fact of getting 25# plus fish again. But as a captain my diminishing number of charters the last three years says my clients want to catch quantity not quality.

73	Healthy fish, recovering bait fish population. We can afford to wait another year for more data to come in before considering cuts. Chinook are the economic driver of the industry, L Trout are now naturally reproducing. Chinook have taken the hits of cuts enough is enough!
74	Poor. NRC should not make decisions! Let biologists do there job.
75	the fish are big and healthy but not very many of them. further cuts can only decrease them further
76	If the DNR continues down this path with the cuts the chinook salmon fishery will collapse. Clients are not happy catching lake trout, cut the plants on them.
77	The state of the Chinook fishery seems to be very poor. I have not seen this since probably the 80's, and even then I think we had better fishing. I know BKD is different then lack of bait, but this is the worst I've seen.
78	Very Poor fishing, low numbers of fish.
79	Fish are fewest ever, but larger and healthier than the last 2 or 3 years
80	Not sure we have over 600 captains enrolled - lol
81	My very brief opinion , Chinook fishing SUCKED
82	Fair to poor but not dismal
83	we have 5" to 6" alwifes in side the lake trout & 2" to 3 " in side the salmon ?????
84	Believe that the bait survey is done in the wrong areas due to increased water clarity. Also wild reproduction is not accurate and probably cannot be.
85	We need to increase the plant. The condition of the lake is poor.
86	Bigger fish this year seeing some bait.
87	Grand Haven needs higher plants! We have NO natural reproduction in the Grand River. We also have the highest fishing pressure with the most charters on Lake Michigan. Cut other ports if you must, but we need MORE FISH! Of all Species.
88	With the large return of lake trout and salmon we have had this year, I feel that if you reduce our plant any more than you have, in the next few years there won't be any more fish.
89	Hard to explain to our customers why 1 salmon in the box is a good day!
90	most kings I HAVE CAUGHT HAVE BEEN SMALL AND HAVE NO BAITFISH IN THERE BELLY
91	We have seen a drastic decline in our salmon and steelhead catch since 2012, however I believe we still have a lot to offer as a charter boat service as long as our catch rates don't go any lower and we still have the opportunity to catch king salmon.

92	I think if they still plant them the Kings will find something to eat just like perch eat sea fleas & coho & steelhead eat bugs capt Chris Roses seacrete charters
93	The current state of our Chinook fishery needs to be reevaluated by a third party to come up with an unbiased report of the actual state of our fishery.
94	Declining
95	Fewer and bigger fish seeing quite a bit of bait. Big fish are certainly not starving
96	I think it is just fine. I believe the ratio is perfect
97	Not enough, catching nice, not many.
98	Declining
99	Put more fish in Lake Huron instead of always focusing on Lake Michigan
100	The fish were very healthy and I harvested more 20# plus fish than the last 8 years combined but I can tell there are a lot less in the lake and approximately 80 percent of the fish are fin clipped. We don't need the cut the DNR is proposing
101	There's not enough fish to fish for
102	Obviously the numbers are down but there are a lot if big fish being taken this year.
103	Not as good as previous years. Less customers willing to charter trips for Salmon. Many do not want to fish or eat Lake Trout. News media not helping the charter industry.
104	Numbers are down but size is up, error on the safe side.
105	Sad sad. Something has to happen ! I do not trust DNR reports !
106	Poor compared to recent years.
107	The fishery is not in great shape. We don't have enough bait to support big numbers of salmon. Average size salmon for 2016 has been 10 to 12 pounds. Let the bait fish recover before we end up like lake huron
108	Dismal Seeing quite a bit of bait not many fish.
109	Numbers are way down
110	It is declining each year.
111	not anuff food to support the number of fish
112	Poor.
113	Figure out a way to kill the zebra mussels Maybe they could play at L wives
114	sucks
115	Low numbers
116	Numbers are off 50% or more. Almost all fish are wild. 3 year old fish are big and healthy.

117	Here in this northern port, we have seen Bait all summer long and we have noticed that kings are eating gobies and smelt as well as alewives. Treat Lake Michigan as you do in deer management and create zones. The guys in Leland see bait as well as Arcadia.
118	It sucks!
119	The fish seem healthy, but not as big as years prior.
120	less fish last few years
121	I think its to drastic of a cut
122	Numbers are down but the fish are bigger. Less fish equals more bait per fish so they are bigger.
123	Low but willing to not over plant for future fishery and risk not having enough bait
124	We must do everything we can to help sustain this fishery
125	Frankfort ,MI recieves no plants and the Chinook fishery there is very poor compared to 5 yrs ago.. Plenty of bait...especially off the Pt. Betsie area..From Manistee north its been a Lake trout fishery the last several yrs.
126	Low number of chinook... ALL YEAR CLASSES... matures are very healthy. Fish caught have several year classes. Many alewives 6 to 8 inches long. Lake trout .. too many... current lake trout caught are full of alewives!
127	Very few Chinook around.
128	Terrible
129	I feel there are not enough chinooks in Lake Michigan and way too many lake trout.
130	It is allready down too far now.
131	not good
132	It is not consistent. The plantings don't seem to be in line with the forage base.
133	Chinook population is at a critically low level. One that can not afford to be depleted any further. With any more stocking cuts the wiers will have a difficult time obtaining enough eggs and milt to provide stocked fish for the lake.
134	Fish are healthy, population is down from previous years
135	Seeing less in the last 2 years. Although some of there stomach are full of 4-5 inch alfie.
136	Lack of kings and tons of negative media coverage is hurting our charter business.
137	It's said we need to cut plants to prevent a population crash. With the levels of cuts already it's basically a slow crash now. The fish are healthy, and there are very reduced river returns natural reproduction is overstated
138	Fair, the chinooks have been big this year just not many of them. The trut supplement the catches. But the customers really want to catch kings.
139	Stuffed with Alewife - good quality healthy fish
140	It would be nice to see more King Salmon planted and less Lake Trout. It is sad to see what the dnr and feds doing to the lake.

141	The fishing has been decent. The overall numbers have been down again but the quality and size of the fish showing up in July and August have been good.
142	Healthy for sure but numbers have fallen below any decent fishable numbers. The limit needs to be reduced to 3 and spawning fish need to be protected if stocking cuts are made.
143	DNR should be held accountable for the collapse of the Chinook fish in Lake Huron. The same thing is about to happen in Lake Michigan. Tell them to stock bait fish to feed the multi million dollar fishing program that is about to collapse.
144	Seems there are less fish.
145	Overall numbers are the lowest they have ever been.