



cannonball

G A Z E T T E



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN CHARTER BOAT ASSOCIATION • SPRING 2017

SECRET PLANS TO ALLOW COMMERCIAL NETTERS TO KEEP WALLEYE

SECRET PLANS TO ALLOW COMMERCIAL NETTERS TO KEEP WALLEYE AND LAKE TROUT

Capt. Terry R. Walsh

A few years ago, a Michigan State University fisheries student spent an entire summer on commercial fishing boats in Saginaw Bay. His objective was to determine the amount of walleye caught as "bi-catch" (non-targeted species) in commercial small mesh trap nets. The results estimated that between 23,500 and 102,000 walleye are easily killed in commercial nets during the course of a given season.

So why is the DNR even thinking of allowing commercial netters to keep five pounds of walleye "bi-catch" per net each time nets are pulled when annually such a large number of walleye are killed each season? Under the proposed new law a netter with 20 or more nets listed on his license would be allowed up to 100 pounds per license whether or not he actually had that many nets set. If all the current licenses in Saginaw Bay were active and fished, up to 680 pounds of walleye can be kept each day the nets are lifted. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on compensating the commercial netters and removing as many small mesh trap nets as possible from the bay.

For the last three years the DNR has been telling the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee (LHCFAC) its "goal is to is to get all the commercial nets out of Saginaw Bay to speed the recovery of yellow perch". Allowing the commercial fishers to keep walleye will merely increase the value of the licenses and encourage the continued use of the nets instead.

Walleyes are currently classified as a sport fish and are not approved for commercial harvest. This was decided in the State courts several years ago when commercial netters were trying to take advantage of a growing walleye population in Saginaw Bay. Over the last six years, however, negotiations without public input have been occurring to allow the commercial "bi-catch" of walleyes.



The two main bycaught species in Michigan's commercial fishery are: lake trout & walleye.

Walleye and lake trout are two of the most important sport species in the Great Lakes yet they are not listed as sport or commercial species in the proposed commercial fishing Statute. The Director would have the authority to designate any species as commercial if it is not on the sport fishery list, and this leaves the potential that both walleye and lake trout could become commercial species in the future.

A major concern of boaters and anglers in Saginaw Bay and other Great Lakes waters is knowing the exact locations of commercial nets so they can avoid them. Providing GPS coordinates of net locations online and/or ports when the nets are set or moved would greatly reduce accidental encounters between boaters and commercial nets. This is an important safety concern that needs to be included in

(Continued on page 3)



From the Helm . . .



February 16, Vice President Captain Rich Haslett and I attended a meeting at Jays Sporting Goods in Clare, MI. We were invited to attend by MDNR fisheries people

along with other sport fishing group officials. All groups attending were there to be made aware of a new set of statutes being proposed for commercial fishermen and retail fish markets. Both MDNR fisheries chief Jim Dexter and MDNR senior fisheries biologist, commercial harvest, Tom Goniea presented the new proposed Commercial Fishing law statute updates and changes to existing statutes.

Listed here are some of the specific goals of the proposed legislation.

1. Define commercial terms and or definitions.
2. Update archaic terms and or definitions. Much of this law was written in 1929 and verbiage is unusable in today's legal system.
3. Update and remove obsolete regulations.
4. A big one for us as sport anglers and charter operators...modernize catch reporting with commercial harvest and retail sales. This will provide better info on how much fish is actually being harvested by commercial fishers.
5. Modernize and increase fees, fines and penalties. As of right now fines are so small, the court system throws some of these cases out.
6. Add for restitution in poaching cases.

Several things for us as Charter fishing operators. The Lake trout sport trolling license will be eliminated. This license was originally used for


fishermen catching and selling Lake trout and dates back to 1929. Over the years, there has been much confusion over this license. Some COs have enforced the use of this license, others have not required charter operators to have the license. Second item that is of some concern to our captains on Lake Huron, especially Saginaw Bay is the "by catch" of Walleye in the Saginaw Bay region. The new proposed statute allows for the "by catch" of Walleye and Lake Trout up to a certain amount. The amount we have heard at the February meeting was approximately 100lbs or less in their creel catch. This is a proposed weight limit on bycatch Walleye and Lake Trout.

Captains who have concerns over this new commercial legislation need to attend our April board meeting at the Doherty Hotel in Clare, MI or send their concerns and opinions to us via email. MCBA website has all officers' phone numbers and e-mail addresses listed in the member's area. We welcome Captains as your representatives, your feedback to us. By searching the MDNR website, commercial fishing section, there is info regarding the new proposed legislation. We look to see these upgraded statutes to become law sometime in late 2018.

After another mild winter many of us are in hopes of a good hatch of Alewives this spring, we could sure use it for our King Salmon fishery. In closing with my spring President's report, I hope everyone will have a great season this year. Most of our targeted fish catches last year were very good to excellent on our great lakes, we just need our King fishery to improve. Stay safe and have a great summer.

Kind regards,

Eric Andersen - President MCBA 

 Visit MCBA Industry News & Events: www.fishmcba.com/members

"CANNONBALL GAZETTE"

Editor: Larry Lienczewski · published by the
MICHIGAN CHARTER BOAT ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 80162 · Lansing, MI 48908-0323
800-622-2971

OFFICERS

President: Eric Andersen · (231) 362-3242
13568 9 Mile · Kaleva, MI 49645
Vice President: Rich Haslett · (248) 542-1563
292 S. Zimmerman Rd · Beulah, MI 49617
Secretary: John Giszczak · (734) 787-0030
9760 Judd Road · Willis, MI 48191

Treasurer: Larry Lienczewski (989) 684-7943
3396 Anna Drive · Bay City, MI 48706

Directors

Northern Lake Michigan
Bill Winowiecki · (231) 228-7417
3700 Schomberg Rd · Cedar, MI 49621

Central Lake Michigan
George Freeman · (231) 845-1779
6888 Illinois Rd. · Ludington, MI 49431

Southern Lake Michigan
Mike Nelson (616) 990-4421
15801 Stanton St. · West Olive, MI 49460

Upper Peninsula

Brian Helminen · (906) 482-2424
22950 Airpark Blvd · Calumet, MI 49913

Southern Lake Huron

Ken Deaton (989) 428-3130
2905 Parkview Drive · Port Hope, MI 48486

Northern Lake Huron

Rick Konecke (989) 255-4524
916 Ford Ave. · Alpena, MI 48707

Lakes St. Clair and Erie

Henry Walters · (586) 725-3678
7103 St. Clair Ave · Fair Haven, MI 48023

the Statute.

Another concern is allowing the commercial fishers to have their own committee representation to negotiate future regulations with the DNR. Currently, each Great Lake has its own Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee, which acts as a liaison between the DNR and the angling public. Sport fishing groups, chambers of commerce and commercial fishers all have a seat on the committee and a vote in all fisheries matters. Common goals are set for the good of all who use the Great Lakes. To allow the commercial fishers their own unique committee to do business with the DNR is a real mistake. If all special interest groups were allowed to do that, lake-wide management would become impossible.



The two main bycaught species in Michigan's commercial fishery are: lake trout & walleye.

Finally, the DNR has been negotiating a deal with the commercial fishers behind closed doors for the past six years. The Great Lakes Citizens Fishery Advisory Committees have not been involved nor will they be involved in any discussions leading up to the draft Statute that will be shared with the Legislature. Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter has been quoted as saying, "Unfortunately this is an issue that could not wait for spring Advisory meetings as they are too far out on the schedule." I have talked to a couple fisheries biologists who knew nothing about the proposed draft until a week ago! Developing a new commercial fishing, Statute impacts both the sport and commercial fishery, and the DNR has the responsibility to ensue the Lake Committees and general public has plenty of opportunity to participate in discussions and help determine the final version of the Statute. It's critical that captains and mates call Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter in Lansing (517/ 284-5836) and tell him this proposed Draft Legislation is badly flawed and needs the input of sportsmen throughout the State. 🐟

WANTED: Fishing Reports
emailreports to: Fishing@FishMCBA.com



Maritime Licensing Specialist

Lt. Commander USCG (retired)
Charles "Chuck" Kakuska

SEA K'S LICENSING LORE

As spring-like temperatures tease wannabe fisherman like myself, I can't help but think mother nature still has a few tricks up her sleeve. Not going to put the shovel and boots away quite yet. I am hoping for more time on the water this year but that seems to be my hope every year.

The biggest news in the maritime licensing arena is a notice published by the Coast Guard on December 23, 2016 entitled "Merchant Mariner Credential Processing Delays Update". For those of you who haven't heard, the Coast Guard is as much as 4-5 months behind processing certain levels of paperwork. The notice says "If your credential expires between December 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017, you can work with the expired credential provided you have a valid medical certificate and a form letter from the Coast Guard which is available at:

www.uscg.mil/nmc Initially it sounds like you might be able to delay the submission of your renewal paperwork but you can't because part of that application package will be a new physical which is required for the Coast Guard to issue your new medical certificate. Please continue to start your renewal process early. Remember if you start the renewal process no more than 8 months early, the Coast Guard will issue your new credential but it won't become effective until your current one expires. This will allow you to still get the full 5 years you are paying for.

I hope you all have a tremendously successful fishing season this year no matter what species you are chasing. Look forward to seeing you all at the conference in the fall. 🐟



Show Chairman

Captain Rich Haslett—Vice President

248-542-1563
taloncharters@gmail.com

As of this writing we have finished doing two sport shows with one to go in Grand Rapids. The attendance was well above average at the Ultimate show and the simulator was a great success. Our show at Outdoorama was below average for visitors. The stormy weather had many people afraid to leave their homes the first couple days and this made the attendance lower than expected. We


(Continued on page 4)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Captain John Giszczak



Captain / Mates! The 2017 fishing season is just around the corner. If you have not sent your membership application in yet time is not on your side. The MCBA website is starting to get lots of hits from people looking to book a trip on your boat! There is still time to get in on the action – don't delay join today. Please make a copy of your application in the event your application gets lost in the mail, plus it's good proof for the I.R.S.

 Visit MCBA Industry News & Events: www.fishmcba.com/members

(Continued from page 3) . . . **Sport Shows**


are hoping for a strong finish at our last show in Grand Rapids.

I want to thank the following Captains who donated a charter for this year's shows. Without Captains donating their services, the MCBA Scholarship Fund would not continue to grow as it has in the past.

1. Captain Gary Smith (Rod Master Charters)
2. Captain Scott Anderson (Far-Fetched Charter)
3. Captain Ed McMillion (Fish On II Charters)
4. Captain Frank Piku (Captain Franks Charters)
5. Captain Kevin Roberts (Fish Stalker Charters)
6. Captain Mike Nelson (Nelson Charters)


I also want to thank the following people that volunteered to work the booth at the shows: Capt. Kevin Roberts, Capt. Ed McMillion, Capt. Mike & Pam Nelson, Capt. John Giszczak, Capt. Doug & Mary Karakas, Capt. Henry Walters.

I have started my list for Captains willing to donate a charter for the 2018 shows. If you would like to donate, please contact me at 248-542-1563. Remember, if you donate we will display your bro-

chures at all shows and you will be reimbursed \$200 for your fuel costs. MCBA needs these donated charters to help keep the show costs down and to make our Scholarship a success. 

MCBA COOKBOOKS

The MCBA Cookbook is still available for sale. These books are great sellers to your customers during their outings. Captains that want to purchase books to sell please contact me at:

taloncharters@gmail.com
or 248-542-1563. 



DNR Fisheries News

Donna Wesander, DNR Fisheries
Charter Reporting Program

email wesanderd@michigan.gov

phone 231-547-2914, ext 223.

2016 Charter Results:

The data which charter operators submitted in 2016 has been compiled and is ready for use. Here are a few 2016 charter fishing data results: 1) Charter trips remained stable, there were 17,367 trips reported; 2) Lake Michigan saw a decrease of about

(Continued on page 5)



The next issue of the Cannonball Gazette will be published in March. Submissions **must** be in by **May 21, 2017**

Send photos and news items to: larry@saginawbay.com

(Continued from page 4) . . . **Fisheries**

1,000 trips; lakes Huron, Erie, and the St. Clair system had increased trips, Lake Superior was unchanged; 3) Grand Haven port had the most reported charters, 1,353 trips; 4) Saginaw Bay continues to see an increase in walleye charters, there were 800 charter trips and almost 1,200 walleye caught in the bay; 5) the total of all fish species reported caught for the state was 244,000 which is up by almost 40,000 compared to 2015, the vast majority of that increase came from increased walleye and yellow perch catch; 6) total charter harvest for chinook salmon in State of Michigan waters was 22,464 fish, a decrease from 2015; 7) Coho salmon harvest was 9,000 fish, an increase of 3,000 fish; 8) Lake trout harvest decreased by 2,000 fish, brown trout and rainbow trout (steelhead) harvest also decreased; 9) Almost ½ of operators are now using the online reporting method; 10) there are 60 charter businesses chartering with more than one boat.

I have produced individual tables for each of the ports where charter fishing activity occurred; the tables are available on the DNR Charter Fishing web page. Feel free to contact me if you need assistance finding this information on the web, or would like for me to email you particular port data.

Very Important:

The charter data you submit is an integral part of the data used to help guide fisheries management actions in Michigan. The goal is to provide a diverse and healthy fishery to all anglers; this includes you and your clients. Please think about the significance of your data and the importance of accurate reporting when you are filling out your monthly charter reports. 🐟

DNR Research Vessels - Welcome Aboard!

Surveys conducted by the DNR Fisheries Division's Great Lakes research vessels are designed to examine and collect information on all aspects of the Great Lakes fish community and habitat. This information is essential in supporting the DNR's mission to conserve, protect and manage the billion-dollar Great Lakes fishery resource for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations and continues assessment and evaluation work begun in the 1960s.

Throughout the summer, DNR vessels are visible residents of Great Lakes ports. The public is encouraged to visit the vessels and talk with the crews about fisheries assessment operations. Learn more about the efforts of each of the DNR's vessels at the Fisheries Division's Research website or check out the DNR's fact sheet about these research vessels online.

Illegal Charters:

Anyone with information regarding the illegal operation of unlicensed charters is encouraged to call the DNR's Report All Poaching (RAP) hotline at 800-292-7800. The RAP hotline is a toll-free, 24-hour, seven-days-a-week number that enables citizens to report violations of fish and game laws, as well as other natural resource-related laws. It is operated by DNR's Law Enforcement Division. Those providing tips can remain anonymous. In all complaint cases, adequate information is required for LED officers to do an investigation; the more information the better (e.g. MC numbers, make and color of boat, person's name if known, vehicle driven, location, time and date of illegal activity, etc.). The RAP hotline now accepts text messages in addition to telephone calls; photos can be included with text messages. The DNR also offers a web-based reporting form.

Monthly Reporting:

The annual packets for monthly charter fishing reporting to the DNR will be sent out to operators at the end of March/beginning of April. Operators who report online DO NOT receive a reporting packet in the mail. Online reporters can access their account at any time; please remember to use the non-fishing month feature to check off early months of 2017 when you were not actively fishing. If you are using paper forms but would like to change from mail to reporting online, please contact me to set up your online reporting account. An operator cannot use both methods to report, one option must be selected. Eventually, all charter operators will be required to report using the online application, think about signing up today.

Have a safe and successful fishing season! 🐟



Northern Lake Huron

By Captain Rick Konecke
MCBA Director



Over The Limit!

I saw this article and thought that everyone knows a person like this or has heard of a person like this. Just a bit over the limit there, buddy. The sport of fishing has always needed a true bad boy, and I think we may have found him.

Stanley, 73, was spotted by a warden on Lake

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) **Directors' Report**

Onalaska catching 22 fish. So far, so good, still under the 25 fish limit. Later that day, he returned and caught 25 more. Whoops! Double the limit. When the wardens approached Stanley to confront him for his overfishing and give him an insignificant punishment, they found an ocean's 11 level heist of pan fish stored in his freezer.

Stanley had 2,066 bluegill, 418 perch, and 88 crappie in his freezer. That is 2572 fish! In addition, the DNR had to actually count them all! The daily keeping limit for each is 25, and the possession limit is 50. When you are off by 2,422, it is very hard to go with the "I lost count" defense that usually gets you out of a warden's wrath when you have an extra fish or two on the stringer. According to the Winona Daily News, Stanley had seven previous citations for overfishing and has lost his license three different times. In addition, you know what they say; eight strikes and you are out. Prosecutors in Wisconsin want to revoke his license, confiscate his boat, fine him \$25,000 AND confiscate his two freezers where he was storing the fish. The last part seems like overkill, but the punishment should fit the crime, since he did technically over-kill 2,000 fish.

After a warden watched him catch the fish, keep the fish, store the fish, and saw all 2,500+ fish in his freezer, Stanley is still somehow pleading not guilty on the four charges. Best of luck to him during the trial. 🐟



Lake Erie & Lake St. Clair

by Captain Henry Walters - MCBA Director

Well it's that time again to get everything in order for boat inspections if needed. Off to getting the boat ready for another season of fishing.

Winter looks like it's coming to an end (if you want to call it winter). With hardly any ice this year, everyone's been fishing out of their boats most of this season.

The St. Clair River has been full of Walleye all winter so the fishing's been great. In the really deep water, you can't keep the sturgeon off. Looks like it might be the start of a good fishing season!

If there's anyone out there interested in being a Lake Erie or Lake St. Clair Port Captain, please give me a call. (586) 725-3678 home (586) 206-0626 cell

I could use the help. Well that's it for now. Good luck with fishing this season. 🐟



Central Lake Michigan

By Captain George Freeman - MCBA Director

The Annual Ludington Regional Fishery Workshop was held Saturday January 14 at West Shore Community College. Dan O'Keefe Southwest District Educator, Michigan Sea Grant, conducted the meeting. This year's program included presentations on Lake Michigan's plankton problems, tribal fishing, salmon and trout tagging programs, where wild Lake Michigan salmon are born, and an interactive computer modeling exercise. Presentations were made by representatives from Michigan Sea Grant, NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Michigan State University's Quantitative Fisheries Center. The workshop was well attended and well worth the time I spent there.

On February 22nd members of the Ludington Charter Boat Association met with personal from Michigan DNR Fisheries Division to discuss an experimental Coho Salmon net pen plant in the Big Sable River at Ludington's Sate Park. In past years Chinook Salmon have been net penned there, but due to planting cuts in Chinook Salmon for 2017 no Chinooks are scheduled to be planted in Ludington this year. The discussions went well. It was decided to plant 50,000 Coho's in the river splitting them in two parts. Up to 20,000 fish will be net penned and the remainder of the 50,000 will be direct planted in the river. The plant is scheduled to take place later in March. Coho Salmon have never been net penned in Michigan and we are hoping for this experimental plant to be successful.

Any captain or club in the Central Lake Michigan region (Muskegon thru Ludington) that would like to provide news for the Cannonball please call me at (877) 456-3474. 🐟



Northern Lake Michigan

By Captain Bill Winowiecki - MCBA Director

It is already March. The older I get, the faster time flies. Did not get out ice fishing as much as I wanted to. Did manage to catch a few nice bunches of Blue Gill.

MC Sports is closing all of its stores. MC Sports here in Traverse City was a good sponsor for the MCBA. They came through with some very nice priz-

(Continued on page 7)

es for the fall conference. We will miss all the good people who worked at Mc Sports of Traverse City.

Emma Cook from Enbridge did a small presentation at the MCBA January board meeting. It was highly informal. We learned quite a bit about Line 5 in the Straits of Mackinaw. We told her we were disappointed that the Enbridge representative was a no show at the fall conference. We hope to schedule an Enbridge speaker in the future for a fall conference.

US Fish and Wildlife and representatives from the Michigan DNR met on moving some Lake Trout plants into the West arm of Grand Traverse Bay. The Lake Trout fishing has really gone downhill in West Bay. They decided a plant 50,000 LT off Ingalls Point North of Omena. They are also planting 50,000 LT off Lee's Point Reef.

I was hoping we could have more Lake Trout in the inner bay. There is still discussion about moving more fish into West Grand Traverse Bay for 2018.

The DNR is also eliminating the Lake Trout slot for zones MM1, two, three and four. You will be able to keep two Lake Trout 15 inches and over. They are trying to eliminate killing fish that are caught and released. Our release mortality ratio for returned fish goes up from 15% to 41%, which will be applied to our total allowable catch (TAC). Our (TAC) is an agreement we follow, negotiated in the Tribal Decree.

Spring is coming fast. Time to gear up, and get ready for summer. Be safe out there. 🐟



Lake Michigan
By Captain Tony Radjenovich
MCBA Port Captain - Leland

Are we ready for the 2020 Consent Decree?

As spring 2017 approaches we are reminded that we are yet another year closer to negotiating the 2020 Consent Decree. The spring 2015 issue of the Cannonball brought us all up to speed on what the Consent Decree is and why it is important to us as charter captains. As a reminder, the MCBA is in full support of the DNR and would like to have as much input as possible in the 2020 Consent Decree. We are granted this access by being members of the Coalition.

The Coalition, which is made up of nine Michigan fishing and conservation associations, including the MCBA are represented by the Coalition's attorney Fahey Schultz Burzych Rodas PLC. The MCBA

has confidence in our attorneys who have decades of knowledge and experience with this issue. Our attorneys participate in meetings and discussions with the DNR addressing the concerns and issues of the Coalition. Also, as attorneys of the Coalition, they are present and we are represented at the Executive Council meeting held between the parties to the Consent Decree.

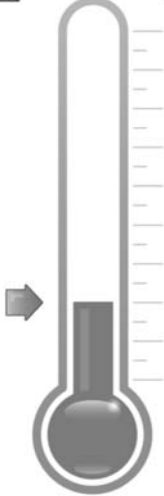
The 2020 Consent Decree will affect the MCBA captains in many ways.

- * How much of the Great Lake waters are federally ceded or made available to tribal commercial and subsistence fishing.
- * The Consent Decree is considered when the DNR sets fishing regulations and bag limits.
- * Due to the ecological changes in the Great Lakes the current tribal interests, as set forth in the Consent Decree, may change as the tribal fisherman are looking to increase their catch limits, gain ceded waters and change methods of netting. Since the whitefish numbers are down the tribal fisherman may ask for more lake trout and walleye.

As MCBA captains we have a voice as member of the Coalition. As members of the Coalition we have a financial responsibility. With that said, the MCBA needs to do our part to help fund the ongoing efforts of the Coalition. Therefore the MCBA Board has approve a fundraiser, a raffle. We need to raise all the money we can. So we have a GREAT prize. A GoPro

Hero 5 Black. This camera is waterproof, voice controlled and has a touch display. We also included a high visible orange float and multi-position clamp mount that will allow the winner to place the camera just about anywhere on their boat. This is how we intend to conduct the raffle. MCBA will send to all registered captains and mates five tickets to sell or purchase. The cost for the tickets are \$5 apiece or \$20 for all five. We will ask that the money and the ticket stubs be turned into a MCBA Director or Port Captain or mail to the MCBA office. (Insert address) The MCBA will announce the winner at the 2017 Annual conference. 🐟

**We Need Your
Support
\$50,000.00**
GOAL



\$8,565.07



A Retiree's View over the Transom

By Captain Jim Fenner

I'm in the south of Florida and it's warm here. I understand it has been surprisingly warm in Michigan also. As background for this article I reviewed the words I wrote last year at this time as we all were trying to see what would transpire during the 2016 season. In addition to the fishing issues, we were facing aquaculture, pipeline and consent decree issues. Aquaculture has receded, but the pipeline issue still threatens, and the consent decree issue is looming one year closer.

I hope when spring comes and we get our boats out, we will have these issues under control, and we can all return to launching, rigging and fishing. But if they are not resolved, as is likely, we cannot afford to let our attention wane. For if we do, we will surely lose and pay the price in the long run.

The pipeline issue remains. They must be turned off. Nothing less will remove the danger. As for the consent decree, nothing has changed yet.

We must be vigilant to the extreme as the new consent decree is hammered out. Our fishery has suffered in many areas under the terms of the current decree with its lax enforcement rules. We should not agree to another decades long decree with such weak tribal law enforcement terms.

Turning my attention to the fishing season past. It seems that Lake Huron is showing signs of recovery, while Lake Michigan is showing even more signs of distress. The issue of Salmon versus Lake Trout jumped to the top of the page during the course of the season. And looking at the stats for charters and fish caught, it is clear why that happened. We know that traditionally, our customers on Lake Michigan favor catching Chinook salmon, but that catch continues to decline (as do the number of charters), while the number of Lake Trout caught continues to increase. On Lake Michigan in 2016 the charter catch for Chinooks was about 22,000, while the number of Lake Trout caught was more than 44,000. Twice as many. Compare that to 2007 when the catch of Chinooks was about 85,000, and the catch of Lake Trout was about 11,000. Fortunately, but still sad, given the customers preference for catching salmon, the total number of charters only declined about 10% during those years, from 12,700, to 11,700. Given the small catch of Kings in 2016, we will be fortunate if the charter numbers continue to decline at such a low rate. If we truly want LM to be a Premier Salmon fishery, major steps will have to be made to reverse the downward

trend.

Scientists tell us the forage base is small and getting smaller. Salmon have traditionally been a 'one trick pony' when it comes to forage. No Alewife, no Salmon. We must find a way to save the forage for salmon, if we want that to be the majority caught fish in the lake. Steps are starting to be taken. They are controversial and have been strongly debated. Here's hoping they're not too timid and too late.

We all have an overwhelming interest in seeing our lakes and our fishery protected, and well managed. We all need the MCBA to be strong and to be actively involved in confronting these issues. Finally, I want to return my focus to the MCBA. I look forward to every MCBA newsletter, and all the in-between correspondence. Through the MCBA we can now quickly organize and share the information needed to confront the issues we face. The MCBA is by far the strongest voice for charter fishermen. By being united, MCBA members can lead the way to the changes that must be made.

When spring arrives, I'll be back, and if the fish are biting, I hope to catch a few for myself, but while I'm doing it, I will also be focusing on these important issues. I hope you will be also.

One thing is for sure; I intend to stay in touch with my friends and former colleagues in the MCBA. The retired member category is the way I do it. Keep this in mind for your own future. When it warms up a little, look for me around the docks. Hope to see you there. 🐟

News Bites

Governor Rick Snyder and the Michigan Legislature have authorized \$1 million to launch a global search for innovative thinkers who can provide the best solutions to this looming crisis.



A global search will begin in 2017 for new and innovative solutions to prevent invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes. Cash prizes will be awarded for one or more solutions submitted in the upcoming challenge.

Ideas at any stage of development will be accepted, from concepts with sound rationale to projects that are already in development or testing phases.

Anyone with an innovative idea is encouraged to

(Continued on page 9)



WANTED

Silver Carp *Bighead Carp*

Your innovative ideas to stop Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes.

\$1 MILLION REWARD

Ideas at any stage of development will be accepted.
Visit www.michigan.gov/dnr/ for more information.


apply (except for agencies directly involved in the challenge). If you are interested in submitting a proposal or wish to receive future information about the challenge, for more information

Visit Michigan DNR: <https://goo.gl/ytoDCX> 

Illinois bill limits commercial fishing on Lake Michigan


The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) could limit commercial fishing on Lake Michigan if HB3272, originally proposed by Rep Sheri Jesiel (R- Winthrop Harbor) and unanimously passed by the house on March 15, gains Senate approval as well.

"HB3227 is an initiative by the Department of Natural Resources," Jesiel said. "It would amend the Fish and Aquatic (Life) code. This is a very important bill. The proposed changes to the statutes are intended to allow the DNR to more effectively administer the Lake Michigan commercial fishing program."

The bill is meant to protect and regulate trout, salmon and lake whitefish by ending commercial fishing, including by gill and pound net. Any of these fish caught in such manner would have to be returned to the lake immediately. 

Legislation introduced to boost Great Lakes funding

U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-MI), Rob Portman (R-OH) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) today introduced bipartisan legislation to spur Great Lakes funding and research efforts and help support effective fishery management decisions.

The Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization (GLFRA) Act gives the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) the legislative authority to support the \$7 billion Great Lakes sport and commercial fishery industry. And will create a steady funding stream and give the USGS, Great Lakes Science Center the legislative authority it needs to conduct the cutting edge research that will protect native fish populations and target invasive species." 

IT'S REALLY ABOUT THE CLIENTS

IT'S REALLY ABOUT THE CLIENTS

By Capt. Terry R. Walsh - Past President



Have you ever asked yourself why you became a charter captain? My guess is most of us became captains because we are addicted to fishing, and it was the only way we could even begin to justify (at least in our own minds) all the time spent away from our wives and families during fishing season. Fishing, for most of us, is "for the love of the game", and we never seem to get enough of it. I've had clients ask me a number of times, "Don't you feel guilty charging us when you are having as much fun as we are?" It wasn't always that way.

I started my professional career back in 1976 when the lake trout and salmon were firmly established in Lake Huron. I was infected with "salmon mania", and my clients were critical to supporting my addiction. I'm sure my early ones saw me as more like Capt. Ahab in his quest for the great white whale. I was pretty intense. I wasn't real patient with those who weren't into the game with the same intensity as I was. I once recall over hearing a client tell one of his buddies as they were leaving, "He's a heck of a fisherman, but I'll never fish with him again. He takes all the fun out of it by getting pissey if a guy loses a dumb fish."

"Fine with me," I thought to myself. "The guy

(Continued on page 10)

doesn't know a fishing rod from a pool queue. Don't want him on my boat anyway. I would have had a limit if it weren't for his inept rod handling!" (Not sounding very client-oriented, is it?)



A story my oldest daughter, who was my first mate for six years, likes to tell is of a trip when one of the women spoke up well after the trip should have been over. "Can we go in now?" she asked. "You've kept us out over an hour longer. We really don't want that last fish!"

"Really?" I thought to myself. "One fish away from a limit and you want to go in? You have to be kidding me! I'll bet she wouldn't quit shopping that easy."

Painfully, I started getting the message. I was bagging fish for a group when one of the men said to me, "Well, you didn't cuss anyone out when we lost a fish." Puzzled by my look, he continued. "Captain last week swore like a drill sergeant when one of us lost a fish! Even said to go sit down and stay out of the way if we didn't know how to handle a rod. Best part of the day was getting off his boat."

After they left, I asked my daughter what she thought of me as a captain.


"You're pretty intense, Dad. (long pause) But at least you don't swear at them."

I did a lot of reflecting on my approach to interacting with clients after that. Up to that point I just assumed everyone wanted to fish as bad as I did. Apparently that wasn't always the case.

Some time after that we were sitting at dockside with another captain and discussing whether to go or not. It was already blowing pretty stiff out of the northeast, which is never a good sign, and it seemed to be building. The weather wasn't an issue for our 31 Tiara, but the looks on my clients' faces had me wondering if it was a good idea as far as they were concerned. My friend broke the silence.

"I'm going," he said. I can handle it. My boat can handle it. People shouldn't book fishing trips if they can't handle a little rough water. It's part of fishing."

Walking back to my clients, I knew what the right thing to do was. "We're not going," I told them. "It's not a safety issue, and we would likely catch fish. But you wouldn't have fun doing it." I'll

never forget the look of relief on their faces. From that day forward I vowed never to leave the dock unless I was reasonably sure everyone was going to have a good time. Why should people be expected to pay good money to be miserable? It took me a while to learn it, but being a charter captain is not about the captain, it's about the clients. They have waited months for this one day in the year to go on a charter trip. They are expecting to have a good time, and with any luck, catch fish as well. The fish can't be guaranteed, but it shouldn't be too hard to see everyone enjoys the trip. For a lot of clients, this may well be the first time they have ever had a fishing rod in their hands let alone suddenly be fighting the biggest fish they have only dreamed of catching. Take the time to explain the whole process to them before the actual fishing starts (even though they will likely forget everything you said once they are battling their first fish). The captain or mate should be right beside them, offering instruction and encouragement. If they lose the fish, don't make a big deal of it. It happens to the most experienced anglers. And if the weather starts turning sour at some point in the trip, let them know they don't have to stay out (with the understanding there will be no refunds unless the captain calls the trip for safety reasons). We've had excellent catches when the weather was intended more for duck hunters, but not everyone likes fishing in the rain. More could be said on the matter, but I think the point has been made. Always make the clients and their enjoyment of the trip your top priority. I've had countless groups over the years that made return trips though they didn't always experience stellar fishing on the previous one. Remember, too, satisfied clients are the best advertising a captain can get. 

More News Bites

No Lethal Control For Cormorants In The Great Lakes This Spring

For more than a decade, double crested cormorants could be killed in 24 states in the eastern U.S. In the Great Lakes, it was mainly done to protect near shore species such as perch and bass.

But last spring a federal judge stopped the program, saying the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wasn't doing the research on cormorants necessary to justify killing them.

In the past cormorants have been killed to protect fish in a number of places in the upper Great Lakes, including the Les Cheneaux Islands, Beaver Island, and Ludington.

(Continued on page 12)

2017 Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension



Local Workshop Sponsors and Contributors:

- Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee
- Michigan Charter Boat Association
- Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fisherman's Association
- Blue Water Sportfishing Association
- Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association
- Lake Huron Sportfishing, Inc.
- Saginaw Bay Walleye Club
- Thunder Bay Walleye Club
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Wildlife Services
- DEQ Office of the Great Lakes
- Saginaw Bay Reef Project Partnership

Workshop Registration:

Workshops are no cost to participants, however pre-registration is requested, but walk-in participation is always welcome!

Register Online:

<http://events.anr.msu.edu/2017LakeHuronFisheries/>

Program information or questions, contact:

Brandon Schroeder, Michigan Sea Grant
(989-354-9885, schroe45@msu.edu)

Spring fishery workshops offer current research and information related to the status of the Lake Huron fishery

Michigan Sea Grant and Michigan State University Extension, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division, USGS Great Lakes Science Center, and local fishery organizations will be hosting four evening regional workshops across Lake Huron's coastline.

Open to the public, these workshops will provide valuable information for anglers, charter captains, resource professionals, and interested community members. Workshops will include information and status updates on topics such as fish populations and angler catch data, forage or prey fish surveys, offshore fisheries from native Lake Trout recovery and success with Atlantic Salmon program, status of Saginaw Bay Yellow Perch and Walleye, updates on fisheries management activities, citizen science opportunities for anglers, among many other Lake Huron related topics of local interest.

You are invited to participate!

Four evening **Lake Huron Regional Fishery Workshops** (approx. 3 hours)

Port Huron

Date: Tuesday, April 4
Time: 6:00 — 9:00 p.m.
Location: Charles A. Hammond American Legion Hall
1026 6th Street, Port Huron, MI 48060

Bay City

Date: Wednesday, April 12
Time: 6:00 — 9:00 p.m.
Location: Bangor Township Hall
3921 Wheeler Rd, Bay City, MI 48706

Oscoda

Date: Wednesday, April 26
Time: 6:00 — 9:00 p.m.
Location: American Legion Oscoda
349 S. State Street, Oscoda, MI 48750

Cedarville

Date: Thursday, April 27
Time: 6:00 — 9:00 p.m.
Location: Clark Township Community Center
133 E. M-134, Cedarville, MI 49719

Workshop details available also online:

www.miseagrant.umich.edu/explore/fisheries/fishery-workshops/



Michigan Charter Boat Association
3396 Anna Drive
Bay City, MI 48706

'In God We Trust'

Official Publication of the Michigan Charter Boat Association • www.fishmcba.com



MCBA
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AND
BUSINESS MEETING
October 20, 21 & 22, 2017
in Holland
Hope to See You There!
Meeting will be held at the
DOUBLE TREE HOTEL
in Holland, Michigan
(616) 394-0111

Learning to Make
Our Charter Businesses
Even Better!

People in the Les Cheneaux Islands say the water birds devastated the tourism economy there by eating all the perch.

For now, there will not be any human pressure on the cormorant populations and no permits will be issued for 2017. In addition, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, it might be years before that changes. 🐟

Vessel Discharge Bill Could Threaten Great Lakes

Michigan Attorney General Bill along with a group of law enforcement officials are asking U.S. Senate leaders to stop legislation that commercial shippers on the Great Lakes say will help business but if enacted could lead to more invasive species entering waterways.

At present, the regulation of discharge of ballast water from commercial vessels rests jointly with the Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as under policies and laws enacted and enforced by individual states.

The legislation seeks to pre-empt traditional state authority to take the actions necessary for

THE MICHIGAN CHARTER BOAT ASSOCIATION IS A FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED
NOT-FOR-PROFIT 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION, AND RECOGNIZED FOR
TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIVING BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

protecting state water resources, while doing away with existing federal laws that safeguard our nation's waters against harmful pollutant discharges," said the letter.

Supporters of the legislation, including the Lake Carriers Association (LCA), which represents large commercial shippers on the Great Lakes, have been arguing its case for years, saying the current patchwork of regulations is unnecessary and expensive, since the Coast Guard long ago required foreign-going vessels entering the Great Lakes to discharge ballast water at least 200 miles from North America. 🐟

Charter Fishing Boat 4-Sale

For Sale 1986 31 Ft. Silverton Flybridge

All marine navigation and fish finding electronics including auto pilot and radar. Tackle negotiable. Boat ran good in 2016.

One owner, well maintained, must see to appreciate.

Selling due to health reasons.

\$12,500.00

Call 231 889 5815 or 231 357 4396 🐟

God Bless America And Our Troops

