



cannonball

G A Z E T T E

Official Publication of the Michigan Charter Boat Association • SPRING 2021

DNR Hopeful on New Cormorant Control Rule

DNR Fisheries Managers Hopeful on New Cormorant Control Rule

By Randy Claramunt, Lake Huron Basin Coordinator

Michigan is often viewed as a leader in double-crested cormorant (DCCO) activity, both in terms of DCCO-fisheries conflicts as well as engaged stakeholders and managers working towards solutions. For those reasons, fisheries managers in Michigan were not surprised with the release of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and publication of their final rule announced late in 2020 with an effective start date of February 12, 2021, as the State has been highly involved throughout the process.

The new ruling is aimed at addressing management conflicts associated with DCCOs, through a new permit system for State and Tribal agencies, that would allow lethal control DCCOs to protect both free-swimming (wild) and stocked fish. In addition to two informational webinars to be held on the new ruling, the USFWS has reached out to State and Tribal Governments in Michigan to begin discussion on the details for implementation of the new permit system.

Given the long history of DCCO-fisheries conflicts in Michigan, fisheries managers and anglers alike are most interested in the bottom line for the new rule: will the State be allowed to control DCCOs, at what areas, and at what level(s)? The State will be allowed to apply for lethal control of DCCO, following the guidance in the ruling, but the specific take levels have yet to be defined for the State. That being said, the State has a long track record docu-



menting DCCO-fisheries conflicts that will serve as a solid basis for requesting adequate take levels to alleviate the most highly impacted areas where DCCOs consumption is in conflict with the fisheries.

In anticipation of the new rule becoming effective, MDNR fisheries managers have built a list of specific sites with justifications for control levels based on the goal of reducing conflicts and balancing DCCO consumption of fish with fisheries management objectives. The new rule provides flexibility to the State for site selection for control activities, noting that Federal lands will be exempt. The take levels for DCCOs have been set at approximately 121,000 nationally, of which approximately 78,000 will be allowed for the Great Lakes region. Once these take levels are allocated to each state, we will prioritize our list of sites and develop a strategy to maximize management activities based on the goal of minimizing DCCO-fisheries conflicts.

(Continued on page 3)

From the Helm . . .



As we move toward the 2021 charter fishing season, Sport fishing and the related sport charter industry is being threatened in more ways than



it has been since the nineteen eighties.

The threats come from multiple directions:

In 2019, with the support of the MUCC, the CB Association, and most sport fishing groups, the DNR introduced legislation designed to bring commercial fishing on the Great Lakes into the modern era. The tie-barred, three-bill package would, among other things, update decades-old statutes by keeping game fish out of commercial nets, establishing penalties for the illegal sale of game fish, requiring the posting of GPS net locations of commercial anglers and the mandating of regular harvest reporting to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The three bills passed through the House of Representatives in February of 2020. The commercial fishing interests immediately started a campaign to prevent the new regulations from becoming law. They enlisted the help of Sen. Ed McBroom, from Vulcan, who represents the western two thirds of the UP. Sen. McBroom, as chair of the Natural Resources committee stalled the bills. The bills were not brought to the Senate committee for review until the last 4 days the November lame duck session. McBroom introduced 143 amendments to the bills. The core groups of the sport-fishery and MUCC didn't have enough time to review and respond to most of these undesirable amendments. The commercial fishing bills died in the lame duck session of the State Senate.

McBroom has now teamed up with Senator Curt Vanderwall, who is on the Regulatory Reform Committee. Senator Curt Vanderwall is no friend to the sport fishing community or the sport charter industry!

Senators McBroom and Vanderwall along

with the commercial fish industry are publicly attacking the MCBA and the sport fishing community, describing us as unreasonable, and charging us with trying to put commercial fishers out of business if we don't support allowing the commercial harvest of perch, walleye and lake trout. There has been no commercial fishing for Walleye in Michigan since 1967.

They have created a major publicity campaign which falsely alleges that sport fishing does not allow the people of Michigan the privilege of having a fresh meal of Great Lakes fish. I have personally been misquoted on various interviews when I stated the facts that Lake Michigan and Lake Huron are only producing one third of the bio mass the lakes produced 20 years ago primarily due to invasives. They do not mention that the biology of the Great Lakes has changed drastically.

In Lake Michigan and Lake Huron whitefish populations are crashing and salmon populations are low. As a result, we have come to depend substantially on the lake trout fishery. If the US Fish and Wildlife were to quit stocking lake trout up in Northern Lake Michigan, the lake trout population would likely be decimated in as little as three years due to commercial fishing, if it were to be allowed or expanded beyond the current decree regulations.

The Tribal Decree negotiations are continuing, but with great difficulty. The decline in the whitefish population has caused a major re-examination of how to allocate the shared resource of whitefish and lake trout. The 2000 Decree divided the resource into 50/50 split: 50% Tribal, and 50% to the State of Michigan, with state licensed Commercial fishers getting a percentage of the white fish. Unfortunately, due to the change of the biology of the lakes the number of fish to be allocated is now two thirds smaller than it was twenty years ago when the 2000 Decree was signed.

Now the commercial fishers want a share

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2) . . . **From the Helm**

of the sport fish allocated lake trout.

In Northern Michigan, we are already on the very edge of our total allowable catch (TAC) which will mean our share could shrink more. That means that if you are sportfishing in Tribal Ceded waters the (TAC) will likely be reduced. Having to sharing with state licensed commercial fishers would shrink it even more. Bag limits, and seasons, would have to shrink. Just as they did in Traverse Bay two years ago. The meeting to cut the limit to 1 lake trout in Traverse City was very HEATED! Our members need to wake up! It's too late when you are having a meeting with the DNR to cut limits and opportunity. This is all going to affect our businesses.

While the water area covered by the Consent decree are limited mostly to Northern Lake Michigan, and parts of Lake Huron, all of both lakes will be effected by the results of the new decree. Everyone needs to be involved in trying to reach a good settlement.


The efforts by the commercial fishing interests to change the rules, are also very serious. The regulation changes being proposed

by McBroom and Vanderwall, if adopted would cover all the Great Lakes waters of Michigan, from Lake Superior to Lake Erie. It would include all of Lakes Michigan and Huron, including Saginaw Bay, It would also apply to Lake St. Clair and all of Michigan waters of Lake Erie. We must be resolute and determined to resist these efforts to allow the commercial taking of Michigan's sport fish. The Michigan Fish Producers are attempting to win over the public with their media campaigns. And in the process, attempt to make sport fishers and the MCBA look like we are bad guys. We need you, our members, to go after these groups with facts, and stick to the biology of the lakes on social media. Just look up Michigan Fish Producers or Fishtown Historic Society. People are throwing money at these two groups, in an effort to keep allowing them to net a shrinking resource. They have high paid lobbyists, and apparently they have donated a bunch of money to a couple of Senate campaigns.

Captain Bill Winowiecki
President

Michigan Charter Boat Association -- 

(Continued from page 1) . . . **Cormorants**

As with any new management system, successful implementation will require a new level of commitment and coordination among management agencies and stakeholders. Challenges will arise such as potentially having to providing new evidence of inefficiencies for non-lethal methods as part of the new permit system allowing lethal take, being required to provide assessments of the control activities, or being able to adequately fund the control activities for the State. However, we have a path forward and fisheries managers are hopeful that this is the start of a longstanding management framework for dealing with DCCO-fisheries conflicts moving forward. 

FINAL NOTICE

2021 Membership Renewal

Available Online

@ mcbamembers.com

Credit cards processed by PayPal



Lake Erie & St. Clair

by Captain Henry Walters
MCBA Director

Hello Everyone

Time to start

working on our boats. I received my paperwork this week from the DNR. I need all my inspections this year. I have quite a few things to do to get my boat this year, just like every year.

It looks like the numbers are starting to go down a little with the virus – a good sign. I have had my first vaccination and am only a week away from the second, so I should be good to go. Sure can't wait to get back to some kind of normalcy!

For all of us that fish the border waters, let's hope that Canada receives enough vaccines to bring their numbers down. Hopefully they will

(Continued on page 4)



be able to open the borders up this year. Only time will tell.

The prices of gas right now are going the wrong way. By the time fishing season begins, I'm afraid gas prices are going to be a lot higher. Last year was sure nice.

Looking at the 2021 Fishing Guide, I do not see any changes at all. Everything looks the same as 2020.

I see no changes in Walleye regulations for Lake St. Clair and St. Clair River. Detroit and Lake Erie is the same for now.

Have a good season. Be safe, keep your mask on. Hope to see everyone at the annual conference in October at the Double Tree Hilton Hotel in Bay City!

See you on the water! 



Southern Lake Huron

By Captain Karl Burnside - MCBA Director

I'd like to first introduce myself as the new Director for Southern Lake Huron. I look forward to working with my fellow Captains in the district to promote a better charter industry and customer experience. Over the next several weeks, I will be contacting MCBA Captains in my district to introduce myself. Please let me know of any questions or concerns you may have that are affecting the charter industry and I will do my very best to represent those concerns to the MCBA board.

I am also looking for a few volunteers within the Southern Lake Huron district for the role of Port Captains. This is an important role and

allows the communication of concerns from your fellow Captains to be brought to the attention of the MCBA board. It also provides an important conduit for the MCBA board to distribute information quickly among members. If you have interest in that role, please contact me at (810) 513-6073.

With 2020 behind us, I am looking at the 2021 season with optimism. As of last fall, it appears the DNR has set a clear directive of how we can safely operate in the COVID environment. The late start last year coupled with confusion over the COVID rules which applied to charter boats was not helpful. This year, with the launch of vaccines and a better understanding of COVID itself, things are looking positive. I had concerns at the end of last season that 2021 charter reservations after the New Year could be affected by COVID. However, so far, this does not appear to be the case which is a welcoming sign. Let's hope the trend continues as we move into spring.

Speaking of spring - No doubt a high priority on the boat check list is examining your safety equipment. I'd like to share a quick safety reminder to pay attention to your fire extinguishers on board. A few years ago the Kidde Company had a large recall dating back to 1973 on many of the fire extinguishers they manufactured. You can check your extinguishers with Kidde to see if they are involved at this website:

<https://www.kidde.com/home-safety/en/us/support/product-alerts/recall-kidde-fire-extinguisher/>

Kidde will replace the affected extinguisher

(Continued on page 5)

"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: Bill Winowiecki · (231) 228-7417
3700 SCHOMBERG RD · CEDAR, MI 49621

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

Tony Radjenovich · (231) 866-0053
1785 N. Eagle Hwy · Lake Leelanau, MI 49653

CENTRAL LAKE MICHIGAN

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

SOUTHERN LAKE MICHIGAN

CJ Anastos · (616) 402-3059
12363 Taft St. · Nunica, MI 49448

UPPER PENINSULA

Jim LaBeske · (906) 337-4433
26788 W. 12th St. PO Box 38 · Hubbell, MI 49934

SOUTHERN LAKE HURON

Karl Burnside · (810) 513-6073
2073 Bisby Dr. · Mount Morris, MI 48458

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



for free. I found every extinguisher I had on board, including the ones in my home were all recalled. Checking only takes a few minutes and assures your last line of defense can be counted on.

Finally, I'd like to wish all MCBA members a safe, enjoyable and successful start to the

2021 charter season. ~~~



Upper Peninsula

By Captain Jim LaBeske - MCBA Director

Greetings from "Copper Island" on the Keweenaw Peninsula of the U.P. I am the new Director for the Upper Peninsula. A little about me... I am fortunate to be a lifelong Yooper. Born in Houghton, I moved across the Keweenaw Waterway to Hancock at the age of 11 via the Portage Lake Lift Bridge (the only one of its kind in Michigan). I received my BSBA from Michigan Tech, sold life insurance, then boats and RV's, managed a full lines sporting goods store for 15 years and "retired" after another 25 Years as a Certified Financial Planner. Looking to keep occupied, I procured my Captains license "just for fun". Now the "fun", as you all know, became work... but a labor of love. Being able to provide anglers of all experience and skill levels the opportunity to participate in our wonderful outdoor sport is very rewarding, not to mention meeting new friends from coast to coast and overseas.

I have been in or on the water for over 60 years, the last 25+ with my wife Tammy. We have hunted and fished all over North America as well as several tropical Islands. My heart belongs to the "Copper Country" which offers diverse opportunities to fish and hunt in comparatively uncrowded pristine waters and woods. We formed Hook & Heuver Guide Services (www.hookheuver.com) in 2015.

Being the director for the U.P. will be challenging, especially staying current on what is going on outside of my local area. I will need help from the other U.P. Captains by receiving news releases, fishing reports and other updates from their areas. We have the larg-

est area covering three of the great lakes, as well as inland waters. I have fished at Copper Harbor in the north to Saxon Harbor in the west, Menominee in the south, Sault Ste Marie in the east and back to Copper Harbor. That's a 920 mile round trip! Please email me information for your area or questions jlaveske@gmail.com

We in the U.P. are proud to step up and help... read here:

<https://www.dailypress.net/news/local-news/2021/03/project-to-restore-grayling-hits-milestone/>

Another interesting read "Saving Buffalo Reef ", an extremely important Lake Superior natural spawning area for Trout and Whitefish can be found here...

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79236_80245_85494---,00.html

I searched "Fish Stocking Lake Superior 2021" (also the same for Lakes Michigan and Huron) and found several articles from DNR's of Wisconsin and Illinois, but none from Michigan... hmmm.

Michigan has planted three strains of Brown Trout in Lake Superior in the last 20 years. Gilchrist Creek, Seeforellen, and Wild Rose. Other strains listed on the fish stocking data base portal are Harietta, Plymouth Rock, St. Croix Soda Lake and Sturgeon River while not being stocked.

Wisconsin recognizes three Strains for Lake Superior, they are Seeforellen, Soda Lake and ST. Croix.

For Lake Michigan, three Strains, Seeforellen, St Croix and Wild Rose.

Seeforellen Strain of Brown Trout are often misidentified usually as landlocked Atlantic salmon See article at...

<https://troutster.com/sub-species-of-brown-trout/>

In the last 20 years Michigan DNR has stocked 242,498 Brown Trout in Lake Superior. While in the same time frame, Wisconsin has planted (in the far western end of the lake)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Captain John Giszczak




It's with a heavy heart I bring sad news. MCBA member, and friend, Captain Paul Fox, Kelli-Jo Fishing Charters (Lake Erie) passed away just before Christmas. Not only was Paul a good fisherman he was more than willing to share daily fishing information from his area of the lake with any captain that inquired. Paul was also a history buff. Even though he resided in the Mio area, he knew the history of the area he fished, locally known as 'Frenchtown', located just east of Monroe. The area was akin to our Patriots fighting the British. Paul loved to perch fish. We would often 'fun fish' and he always enjoyed educating me with additional information about the history of Monroe and the surrounding area. Captain Trevor Fox, Paul's youngest is now carrying on the family business.

What's in a decal? I was recently contacted by the USCG concerning a captain who claimed to be a member of the MCBA drug program. While I was verifying that the said captain was not in our database, we chatted about illegal charters. The USCG was very active last season, boarding fishing boats, especially in the areas from Alpena to Lake Erie.

Due to the virus more people were fishing than in prior seasons. The same is expected the upcoming season. The USCG is ramping up for another season like last season with even more boarding's. The Commander stated that visibly displaying a current year MCBA decals makes it much less likely you will be boarded while out on the lake because they know you are in a recognized random drug program.

I noticed a number of complaints on social media, and was even questioned on my own dock by members who were called twice in one season for a random drug test. This the result of a substantial uptick of drug abuse in our industry in the last few years, prompting the USCG to test 50% of captains nationwide, up from 25% in the past. The MCBA DOES NOT pick the candidates to be tested. The USCG sends us list of captains to be tested every quarter of a given calendar year. We are required to use that list, and to keep accurate records for the USCG of the tests that have been mandated.

A final note, all current members in good standing have been posted to the MCBA website. Please take a minute to check your listing for accuracy of spelling, facts, and phone numbers. Also, click on your web link and make sure it works. -- 


Captains!
Check Your
Website Listing



Visit MCBA Industry News & Events: MCBAmembers.com

(Continued from page 5)) . . . Directors Report

2,329,000 of which 1,947,000 were Seeforellen.

Thankfully, for Lake Superior Anglers, these far roaming fish love to swim east! Tight lines and a one foot chop... stay safe-- 

FINAL NOTICE

2021 Membership Renewal

Available Online

@ mcbamembers.com



Northern Lake Michigan

By Captain Tony Radjenovich - MCBA Director

Captains I hope you and yours are doing well. The pandemic was tough on a lot of people during the winter months. My thoughts and prayers go out to all who may have lost a family member or friend.

As we look forward to the 2021 fishing season getting our boats and gear ready to go are always a top priority for most of us. At the same time the managers of the Great Lakes

(Continued on page 7)




are planning for Spring stocking of fish. For us who fish in northern Lake Michigan we should be aware and have input in the decisions the MDNR makes regarding the stocking of fish. Before we discuss how the anglers in northern Lake Michigan can provide input, I want to give a brief account of how the lake is managed. The MDNR needs to work with the Lake Michigan Committee. The Lake Michigan Committee consist of senior staff members from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin department of natural resources and the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority. The Lake Michigan Committee considers issues and problems of common concern to its members. They develop and coordinate management programs and research projects. They also work together on other items interest.

One of the most common talked about management issues is the predator prey ratio. This means that when stocking predator fish, the MDNR needs to stay within the predator prey models that have been developed by the Lake Michigan Committee to not have more predators in the lake than the prey fish can support. Although many species of fish are stocked each year the most talked about are salmon and trout. This Spring the MDNR will not stock any Steelhead in the lake. The MDNR was unable to take eggs last Spring due to Covid-19. Because Steelhead are not being stocked there is excess capacity for predator equivalents to be stocked. The MDNR have about 235,000 Chinook to replace the Steelhead that would have been planted. The MDNR has decided to plant these fish outside of the 1836 Treaty Ceded Waters, which includes all of northern Lake Michigan.

It is painfully obvious that only a small portion of the Chinook are being planted in northern Lake Michigan. It does not make any sense in a year when there are additional Chinook to be planted. Not to mention that the Steelhead will not be planted either.

One way to participate in the discussion of stocking fish in Lake Michigan is to participate on the Lake Michigan Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee. The charge of the Lake Michigan Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee is to review and provide input and direction into

the fishery goals, objectives, and management plans for Lake Michigan. Members help the DNR chart the future course of fisheries management by representing the diversity of citizen interests in the Lake Michigan basin. The President of MCBA sits on the committee and represents charter captains from the perspective of our statewide association. While there are many fishing clubs and organizations that sit on the committee, currently only one from northern Lake Michigan is on the committee and a second organization is being considered. As MCBA Director of Northern Lake Michigan, which includes all ports north of Arcadia, I feel the north end of Lake Michigan is not adequately represented. If you have a club or organization from your port, please reach out to LMCFAC Chair Denny Grinold or contact me I will provide you more information. Your participation in the process is the best way to ensure your comments and concerns are heard by the decision makers. **For more information visit: mcbamembers.com**

Good luck as you prepare for your 2021 fishing season. -- 



Central Lake Michigan


By Captain George Freeman - MCBA Director

Good news for Lake Michigan anglers. Because Steelhead were not stocked in Lake Michigan last spring it has been decided to plant an additional 224,500 Chinook salmon. The ports of Grand Haven and St. Joseph will receive the additional fish. It's looking like Ludington will receive 40,000 Coho Salmon again this year and approximately 80,000 Sturgeon River strain Brown Trout. Due to the pandemic all the Coho released last spring in the Sable River at Ludington's State Park were direct planted. The Ludington Charter Boat Association is hoping to net pen some of the fish this spring.

The first annual Ludington Big King Bonanza will be held this year. It is a Big King Tournament consisting of one division with two different fishing periods. There will also be a separate Lake Trout division. For more info check

(Continued on page 8)

out Captain Chucks II website.

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. -- 



A Retiree's View over the Transom

By Captain Jim Fenner

Covid continues to drive the boat, and I'm concerned that it will be an issue through most of 2021. Being senior citizens, we qualified for our vaccine in the first wave. It wasn't easy to get scheduled, but finally, we did. Got our second shot on Feb 17, and on February 21, we escaped to the south of Florida again, and some warm weather for a much shorter time than most recent winters.

January was very mild in Michigan, however February was unusually cold and snowy. Until the end of January, the lakes were all mostly open, but they iced up quickly in February. However March is coming in warm. The ice cover on Lake Michigan is around 12 % as I write this (early March) the ice cover is mostly confined to the very south end plus the bays in the northern areas. The majority of the main lake is all open. We know that environmental factors affect the forage base, and hence the fish. Size and health. If the current climate trend continues, the lake will warm up quickly this spring. That should result in a strong early fishing season, and hopefully a strong year class of alewife.

Besides Covid there are two super-major issues facing the Association: The consent decree negotiations are ongoing after being extended; rumors suggest it is not going well at all, and they may have to be extended again. It sounds like a broken record, as I am writing the same thing I wrote last spring, but this will continue to be by far the most important issue for the Association from now until a new settlement is reached. Hopefully we will not agree to another decade's long decree with the same weak tribal law enforcement terms, and the state will stand firm and not allow the

tribes to gillnet our sport fish. The second super-major issue involves the efforts of state licensed commercial fishers to expand their fishery to Lake Trout, Perch and Walleye. The commercial fishers are highly organized, well-funded, and seem to have at least two high-powered state senators working for their interests, and against ours. It is going to be struggle to protect the sport fishery from these powerful politicians, the commercial fishing communities and organizations.

Two other issues we must watch closely: The pipeline issue still threatens our relatively pristine lakes. The state has ordered that line 5 should be shut down by May 12, but Enbridge, aided by the State Chamber and other corporate interests, are trying every possible way to keep it operating, despite the very real risk of destroying the Great Lakes, which would surely occur in the event of a rupture of the line.

The last issue is the new Federal Cormorant control plan. The details are just starting to emerge. It looks like a good starting place, but from what I can glean from the early details, it falls far short of what is needed and necessary.

Turning my attention to the fishing season past. In Ludington the early LT fishing was good, but declined as the season went on, and the catches of salmon were small throughout the season. The DNR increased the plant of Kings a while ago. Will that increase the catch? Will there be enough bait to sustain this larger plants along with the ever increasing numbers of Lake Trout, which share the bait? Only time will tell, but the die is cast for more salmon in the lake. Here's hoping we have not made a mistake.


The MCBA is actively involved in confronting these issues as it should be. We need to remember that the MCBA is by far the strongest voice for charter fishermen. By remaining united under the MCBA banner, members can help shape the changes that are going to be made. We all have an overwhelming interest in seeing that our lakes and our fishery are protected, and well managed.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8) . . .over the Transom

Through the MCBA we can quickly share the information needed to confront the issues we face. We need everyone to be pulling together, and in the same direction to achieve the best result for the fishery.

Hopefully as the season develops, Covid issues will fade. We will again be able to gather in groups, to debate and decide the future of our fishery, and to share time with our friends and colleagues. And also, with hard work by our officers and friends, perhaps the other issues will break in our favor. I look forward to that. When it warms up a little, look for me around the docks.

Hope to see you there, too. -- 




Maritime Licensing Specialist

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

SEA K'S LICENSING LORE

As the newspapers advertise their spring sales, I'm refueling the snow blower for another arctic adventure. The Coast Guard maritime licensing program continues to suffer through many self-inflicted delays so most renewals and upgrades are taking at least two months to process. Due to these processing delays, the National Maritime Center published another Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB), Change five, dated December 22, 2020. Unlike the previous bulletin, these extension include both your license and your medical certificate. If your MMC or medical certificate expires between March 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, they are extended until the EARLIER of October 31, 2021 OR one year after the initial expiration date of the credential. In either case, if you operate on an expired license or medical certificate, you must carry a copy of the MSIB with you until you receive your updated credential. The Regional Exam Centers remain closed except for testing. The REC in Toledo will allow a maximum of 5 people per day and encourage everyone to make



your exam appointments on-line if possible. On-line appointments make it easier for them to contact you if a conflict arises or they close unexpectedly due to severe weather conditions. The Regional Exam Center is accepting both electronic application packages as well as the traditional paper packages. The NMC rumor that only electronic application packages will be accepted is FALSE. Hope you all have a good 2021 season and look forward to seeing you all at the conference this fall. -- 



DNR Fisheries News

Donna Wesander, DNR Fisheries
Charter Reporting Program
email: wesanderd@michigan.gov
phone: 231-547-2914, ext 223
Mobile phone 231-330-2845

2020 Charter Results:

As I write this, I cannot believe one year has passed since Covid came to our shores. March 2021 means I have been working remotely for one year! One year, which at times felt like eternity and now feels like a blurry 2 months; so many adjustments we all had to make. The Stay Safe Stay Home orders impacted everyone, including the charter industry. Operators who fish in early to mid-Spring (Southeast Michigan, Southern Lake Michigan, and rivers) were most impacted by the restrictions. However, some in the charter industry benefited from Covid and had an increase in business. With no festivals or events to attend, the public sought other activities, one of which was charter fishing. Here are a few 2020 charter fishing data highlights. Charter operators reported 17,092 charter trips (excursions) for State of Michigan navigable waters, 2,000 less than in 2019. Lakes Michigan (11,426 trips), Huron (2,190 trips), Erie (704 trips), and the St. Clair system (2,071 trips) all saw some decrease in trips, while Superior (701 trips) saw an increase. Total charter harvest by species: Chinook (15,490 fish), Coho salmon (6,139 fish), Lake Trout (64,247 fish), Rainbow Trout/Steelhead (5,450 fish), and Brown Trout (137 fish). For the predominantly catch-release species, anglers released 20,678 smallmouth bass and 971 Musky. Walleye harvest decreased in 2020 (39,298 fish) compared to

(Continued on page 10)

2019 (71,195); partially due to inability to fish for walleye in the spring and Yellow Perch was more available to some in 2020. There was a notable increased harvest of Yellow Perch (19,244 fish) compared to 2019 (8,605 fish).

Charter Monthly Reporting: The State of Michigan is promoting use of online systems to do business in Michigan; this includes charter fishing reporting. Online reporters report charter activity via the reporting system called FACTS. 67% of charter captains are using online reporting. Based on your feedback from 2019/2020, we are working on improvements to the FACTS system for year 2021. The FACTS system was implemented to ensure more accurate and timely reporting, allows you to record additional fish species (such as Atlantic Salmon, Cisco/Lake Herring, and Lake Sturgeon), provides maps/visual interface for selecting your fishing locations, and is accessible via a variety of electronic devices such as smartphones and computers. There are 2 different web links for FACTS: one for use with a computer, one for use with a smartphone. Please contact me if you need your login information. If you are currently using paper forms but would like to change 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. I am available to help you understand and use the features of the online reporting system. Think about signing up for online reporting in 2021.


Reminders

- * All charter fishing reporters must report non-fishing months when you were not actively fishing.
- * The annual packets for 2021 monthly charter fishing reporting will be sent out to charter fishing operators in April.
- * Operators who report online DO NOT receive a reporting packet in the mail but will receive an annual email with information.
- * I will send out general report due reminder emails during the year. For those who report via paper and want to be included on the reminders, please send me your email address.

* There are fines and penalties which can be imposed for failure to report or not reporting within the timelines defined by statute.

Remember: 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 which 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.

Please Note: Most DNR employees are still working remotely, and some office phones are not monitored. Please use my work cell number (231-330-2845) to contact me.

Have a safe, healthy, and enjoyable fishing season! -- 

Captain Positions

The Michigan Maritime Museum in South Haven is seeking several qualified, enthusiastic captains to join us for the 2021 season on one or more of our historic and replica On-Water Fleet. The Museum has five on-water vessels that function as floating exhibits and will take to the waters with passengers beginning May of this year. Vessels requiring captains include replica 1812 tall ship Friends Good Will, replica Truscott river launch Lindy Lou, 1941 USCG Motor Lifeboat 36460, 1929 Chris Craft Cadet Merry Time, and 1921 R Class racing sloop Bernida.

You may have the chance to captain one or more of these incredible boats, so apply today!

We are looking for captains who hold a current 25 ton or higher Masters Merchant Mariner Credential as well as those with a 25 ton or higher OUPV Credential. Boat handling ability, dependability, attention to safety and good people skills are essential. All captains must be participants of a random drug testing program. This is a seasonal position that runs May through September. Schedules are flexible from 1 to 5 days per week. This is your chance to

(Continued on page 11)



captain a boat you could only dream of owning and get paid too!

For more information and to apply contact:

Commander of the Fleet, Captain Bob Harnish
at 269-637-8078 ext. 5 or

email: captain@mimaritime.org. -- 



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

First things first, I wanted to thank Michigan Charter Boat Association, the Board, and Members for the opportunity to talk a little bit about illegal charter boat investigations.

Over the last year the Coast Guard has seen an historic increase in the registration of recreational vessels and applications for inspection of small passenger vessels. We believe that this is mainly pandemic driven, as families and small groups search out safe, viable ways to enjoy the outdoors, the waters of the Great Lakes, and generally socialize. The traditional small passenger vessel industry on the Lakes (<100 GT CG Certificated Vessels) had a rough year as State restrictions, and passenger hesitation drastically reduced the numbers of passengers, trips and large events typically held over the summer months. With this reduction, people turned to the 6 passenger or less, and bareboat charter areas, traditionally examined by the State. This has had a couple of different outcomes, some good and some bad.

On the good side, charter boat numbers are up, and enrollment in associations such as MCBA and others around the Lakes is growing steadily. This is a great thing, as we truly believe that the members of professional organizations only improve the safety of all passenger vessels on the Lakes.

On the bad side, we saw a substantial increase in the number of illegal charters throughout the Great Lakes region. It only makes sense, that if you put a large portion of the workforce out of work, and cut back drastically on the activities that people can

safely pursue in groups, people will find a way to earn a couple of extra dollars, and the public will pursue those offerings. When you add in the advantages of social media/advertising, ease of electronic payments through multiple sites, and the ease of access, it's a foregone conclusion that it is going to take place.

Where the Coast Guard can use assistance is through responsible Captains and Operators of Inspected and Uninspected Passenger Vessels. More than 75% of my illegal charter notifications come from legitimate charter and small passenger vessel operators. These notifications assist in the detection of illegal charters and assist greatly with the safety of the boating public and passengers, not to mention ensuring these operators aren't taking money out of the pockets of operators who are playing by the rules.


Over the last three years, with the assistance of the CG Auxiliary, Stations, and DNR, we have posted signage warning of illegal charters in most local marinas within the State, conducted more than 50 investigations in Detroit alone, and provided free training, and presentations to multiple associations.

Through your efforts and our cooperative work, we can, and will make a difference in this area of critical public safety. To report an illegal charter in the Detroit River, Lake Huron, or Saginaw Bay area's please call the Sector Detroit Command Center at 313-569-9559.

Jason Bartholomew, CIV, USCG

Senior Investigating Officer, Sector Detroit -- 

USCG LICENSE RENEWAL HELP:

Lt. Commander, USCG (retired) Charles "Chuck" Kakuska a Maritime Licensing Specialist, has been assisting our members for the past 10 years. We recommend him and appreciate his continued services to our association. Give him a call at (734)847-1723 - SEAKsLic@aol.com for help with your USCG renewal. 

God bless America and our troops



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 15, 16 & 17, 2021
in Bay City
Hope to See You There!
Meeting will be held at the
DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON
in Bay City, Michigan
Reservations: 989-891-6000 Code:

*Learning to Make
Our Charter Businesses
Even Better!*

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.

Grand Haven Chinook Pier


Charter Slip Available for 2021 Season, Minimum Bid \$5000 - For a bid packet, contact Char Seise at cseise@grandhaven.org or

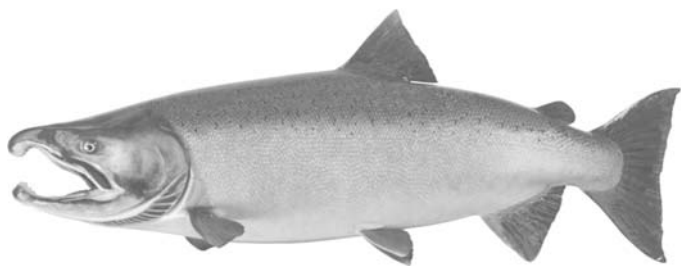
Ph: 616.8412.2550 



1990 Cherokee Chief 310 twin 350

Charter Fishing Boat 4-Sale

Crusader engines, 11'6" wide, Swim platform, Four Cannon Downriggers, Raytheon Radar, Raytheon Graph, Plus more . . . Charter Inspected, ready to fish, Trailer included
Contact Capt. Ken Deaton at 810-542-0435 




FINAL NOTICE

2021 Membership Renewal
Available Online
@ mcbamembers.com


Scheduled Board Meetings

- * April 18 in Clare - Doherty Hotel 10:00 am.
- * Sept 26 in Clare - Doherty Hotel 10:00 am.
- * Oct. 17, in Bay City - DoubleTree 10:30 am.

Get Involved!

All board meetings are open to all MCBA members who would like to attend. Please let us know in advance if you plan on attending so we have enough materials on hand to pass out. Contact any board member or call: 800-MCBA-971 

2020 MIS Report Filing completed on 02/08/2021 DOT Drug and Alcohol Management Information System (MIS)

The MIS report is statistical data compiled yearly by the MCBA that is based on drug and alcohol testing. The data includes the annual number of tests conducted, reasons for testing, information on positive results and what drugs caused the positive results. 



**Newsletter
Deadline**

The next issue of the Cannonball Gazette will be published in late May. Submissions **must** be in by **May 21, 2021**

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