



cannonball

G A Z E T T E

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Mum's the Word on Lake Michigan Fisheries Talks

As printed in the Leelanau Enterprise by Alan Campbell

Did you hear what happened at an important court hearing held Friday in the nearly three year negotiations to divvy up fishing opportunities in Lake Michigan among state and Tribal interests? Neither did I. And neither did anyone outside of a small tent of dignitaries who have chosen to create public policy far from public view. The negotiations have dragged, delayed for a while by the pandemic. At least that was the perception.

But there is a bigger problem. In fact, there are two problems. One is that public policy regulating a resource that affect hundreds of thousands of people is being determined without citizen input.

And the other is that once that policy is set, you and I will be expected to accept its result without protest.

I'm talking about prolonged attempts to write a new fishing pact for most of Lake Michigan including all of the Leelanau Shoreline to replace a court order that expired in the summer of 2020. All parties to the negotiations, including MDNR and Tribal representatives, have been hushed by a confidentiality agreement that's worn out its welcome.


The code of silence prevents Tribal representatives from communicating with their members. And it stops the MDNR director from speaking one word about the state's goals and stances in this secret standoff.



I understand the need for representatives to speak freely to each other, to hold frank discussions. Negotiations can be messy. But neither Tribal nor state constituents have a clue about the priorities of their negotiators other than to get a nebulous "good deal".

It's past time to let some air out of the hot balloon. Time for negotiators to report their progress or lack thereof to a public that will be expected to buy into the result of negotiations.

It's time for negotiators to talk to the people who pay their salaries.

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Leelanau Enterprise 2022. 



Gallagher Charter Lakes

Arthur J. Gallagher & CO.

Gallagher Charter Lakes marine insurance would like to say congratulations to the MCBA and their 50 years of serving the Charter Boat industry of this great state. We've been working with Charter boat owners here for a little over 30 of those years and truly appreciate the partnership that we've developed with the MCBA.

We look forward to continuing our partnership for many years to come.

Wanted to share a quick update in the Charter Boat Insurance marketplace. Gallagher Charter Lakes has always partnered with the best companies to provide our clients the best coverage for the best value. If you are not currently with Charter Lakes and you experience changes with your upcoming renewals, give us a call and be sure to mention that you are a member of the MCBA.

The insurance landscape is going through a lot of changes whether it's home, auto, business or marine. The re-insurance market is also seeing a lot of changes due to Major Catastrophes, Exorbitant judgements in the legal system, and other instabilities. We've watched nearly 20 companies exit the marine insurance marketplace, the last couple of years. And want you to know that our companies are all "A" rated and committed to being available for you over the long haul.

Gallagher Charter Lakes and the companies we work with continue to practice disciplined underwriting in an effort to protect you, your assets and the programs we offer for Charter and Guides.

Congrats on the past 50 years and wishing you all a great ride as you head into the next 50. 🐟



SEA K'S LICENSING LORE

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

I hope you are all having a safe winter season. Regrettably, I was unable to attend the conference last fall but I hope to see you all this coming fall. As the hum of the snow blower is still ringing in my ears, I have to report no significant positive progress at the coast guard national maritime center. I ask myself how some renewals take 3-4 weeks and others can take 6-8. Coast guard response to the question is the "mariner" must have made a mistake, which caused the delays. I know the mariner did not make a mistake because they received their new license without ever being required to submit additional information. Recent license upgrades have taken 3 months to process. The question remains, why??? After 40+ years of maritime licensing I think, the answer is obvious, poor training, inexperienced personnel and an "I don't care" attitude. A terrible combination when you are responsible for regulating the entire maritime industry. Please continue to submit your paperwork early because you never know who will review it and whether they are going to care if you receive a new license or not. Hope you all have a great 2022 season!!! 🐟

PURE MICHIGAN®

MCBA partner Pure Michigan, is celebrating the 50th with new fishing charter promotional ads. Check them out on Facebook and Instagram. 🐟

 **VISIT MCBA Members Area**
www.MCBAmembers.com

God bless America and our troops



From the Helm . . .



As I write this, a snowstorm is blowing through. The spring charter season is only a short month or two away. I am still hoping Traverse Bay will freeze soon so we can get in some hard water fishing for cisco and lake trout before the thaw begins.

Hopefully, COVID-19 is winding down and life can get back to somewhat normal. The sad part is that I, like so many others, have lost some very close friends to the virus. My son works at Munson Medical Center Hospital as a nurse. They are so short-handed that he has been working 12-14 hour days. He also has had to take on more on-call duty due to the short staffing.

By now, you should have received a packet from the DNR detailing the required transition to all on-line reporting. You should have also received emails from the MCBA describing how we attempted to work with the DNR, as required by the Charter Boat Act, to reach a fairer solution. Not everybody has internet access, and some of our members are not as tech savvy as others. The DNR refused our attempts to resolve the issues by negotiations, as we believe is required by our understanding of the Charter Boat Act. The DNR proceeded to issue the new rules over our objections. Under the new regulations there is supposed to be an option to keep using the paper forms if you meet the criteria that have established, however, it seems that there will be very few exceptions allowed. The DNR appears to be using its overwhelming authority to require all Captains to conform to its new reporting procedures despite our concerns.

Donna Wesander was the person in charge of charter boat reporting for the DNR for many years. Donna will retire at the end of April. She has earned a well-deserved break from the huge job she did so well. She will be very missed. The MCBA wishes her the very best in her retirement. Donna's skill and personal friendliness was greatly appreciated by everyone. We always enjoyed meeting with her, and her reports at our annual meetings were always a high point in our program. She was always willing to answer the phone; she could and would talk pleasantly with any Captain. She would work with any Captain in the most pleasant way; helping and guiding them through the reporting system. We hope her replacement will be just as considerate. He or She have very big boots to fill.

My own boat is due for two inspections this spring. Dry dock and Dock Side. Be sure to pay attention to your own inspection situation. I spoke with Patrick Gerber, who does the dry dock inspections in our area. He noted that you would now need a working carbon monoxide detector installed on board if you have a closed bow or cuddy. Also, do not forget to check the expiration dates on your flares. They expire after three years. Expired flares will not be accepted and must be replaced. Also, check for working batteries in your life jacket lights and your water light. Test them to make sure they are in working condition. Just a few friendly reminders.

The Tribal Decree negotiations are still dragging on. I know I sound like a broken record. There is now a new extension of the Decree signed in 2000 until June 30, 2022. There may be additional court hearings before that. These negotiations are very time consuming, and at times,

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SECRETARY'S REPORT


By Captain John Giszczak



If your 6"x8" "state inspected" year decal boat placards are worn out and you would like another set - please contact me, Secretary John (fishstraycat@gmail.com).

Add your name and last 4 digits of your

social security number to the email request.

Please double check your MCBA website listing. We are not responsible for omissions, misspellings, and broken website links. Any website that does not have an SSL certificate will not be added to your advertising listing, once secured please let me know. . 

(Continued from page 3) From the Helm

frustrating.


Due to confidentiality agreements, we had to sign to participate in the negotiations; we have not been able to give any real updates on the negotiations for two and a half years. I am concerned that issues are being discussed, and decisions are being made behind closed doors that are going to be harmful to the charter boat industry and the sport fishing community. We are including with this issue an article printed in the Leelanau Enterprise written by Alan Campbell. I hope you will read and consider what he has written.

The Lake Michigan Citizens Advisory meeting will be held in Clare, at Jay's Sporting Goods on April 5, 2022. It starts at 10:00 a.m. The next Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee meeting will be held at Jay's in Clare on April 26, beginning at 10 AM. The Lakes Erie and St. Claire Citizens Advisory Committee

meeting will be held by Zoom on March 22nd from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Contact Jim Felgenauer or Jim Francis for details. It should be noted that these advisory meetings are open meetings. Anyone can attend, and listen to the reports and discussions, but voting is limited to the designated committee members. The very latest information known to the DNR is usually presented and discussed at these meetings.

The next MCBA board meeting is scheduled for April 24th in Clare at the Doherty Hotel. It also starts at 10:00 a.m. Please contact me if you are interested in attending. As in the case of the advisory meetings, MCBA board meetings are open to any MCBA member who wishes to attend.

Looking forward to spring!
Happy Easter

Captain Bill Winowiecki
President
Michigan Charter Boat Association 

"CANNONBALL GAZETTE"

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**Lake Erie &
Lake St. Clair**
Captain Henry Walters
MCBA Director



Governor releases the Michigan Final Adaptive Management Plan to improve Lake Erie water quality.


In recent years, the Western Lake Erie Basin has been experiencing the reappearance of significant algae blooms, some of which are harmful to aquatic life and can affect the drinking water.

In Lake Erie, several factors contribute to algae bloom. Nutrient rich water from wastewater treatment plants, farm fields, and fertilized lawns, and the warm shallow waters are some of the contributors. There may be other factors that aren't quite understood yet. The causes are complex.

The State of Michigan is committed to improving Lake Erie, ensuring safe water and supporting healthy ecosystems. To reduce the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen entering Lake Erie, Michigan released the Lake Erie Domestic Action Plan developed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, and Natural Resources.

Michigan's plan sets the road map for reducing phosphorous entering Lake Erie by 40 percent by the year 2025.

This is a tall order. I hope some headway can be made under this plan.

Hoping everyone has a great fishing season this year. - Henry 

point to a great year ahead of us.

I am still looking for volunteers in the thumb area as port Captains. Please get in contact with me if you are interested. Among other duties, port Captains play an important role by communicating member concerns to the board, and allow the board to quickly communicate information back to our members.

In our last Cannonball issue of 2021, I mentioned I was contacted by the Michigan DNR for a Walleye tagging program on Saginaw Bay. I have volunteered to participate in this program. It looks like we will be tagging Walleye though out the month of May. If anyone is interested in participating, please get in contact with me I can put you in touch with the program manager. This is a great way to give back and support a fishery we depend on. It also lets the DNR know how much we as charter captains care about the sustainability of our Lake Huron fishery.

No doubt all of us will soon be moving our equipment out of storage. It's time of year again to give priority to checking your safety equipment. One topic I will always bring up because of its importance is your last line of defense – the fire extinguisher. As I mentioned in last year's spring edition of the Cannonball, there was a major recall by Kidde a few years back. Use the link below to make sure you don't have one of these extinguishers on board. Kidde will replace the affected extinguisher for free:

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

Also worth mentioning, there are new updated U.S. Coast Guard fire extinguisher regulations that take effect on April 20, 2022. One of the updates involves the phase-out of older disposable extinguishers with B-I or B-II classifications for newer 5-




Southern Lake Huron
By Captain Karl Burnside - MCBA Director

If the momentum we experienced last year with people wanting to get out and go fishing means anything, all indications

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B, 10-B and 20-B extinguisher classifications. You can find the details here at this link:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/10/22/2021-22578/fire-protection-for-recreational-vessels#sectno-reference-175.320>

Finally, I'd like to wish all MCBA members a safe, enjoyable and successful start to the 2022 charter season. If there any questions or concerns you may have, please contact me at (810) 513-6073. 

Sea Grant Fisheries Workshops



All workshops are virtual, for more information and registration [https://](https://www.michiganseagrant.org/educational-programs/fisheries-workshops/)



www.michiganseagrant.org/educational-programs/fisheries-workshops/

- * **Lake Superior**
March 22, 2022, 6-8 p.m.
- * **Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie**
March 29, 2022, 6-8 p.m.
- * **Lake Huron: Saginaw Bay**
April 12, 2022, 6-8 p.m.
- * **Lake Huron: Les Cheneaux and St. Marys River**
April 19, 2022, 6-8 p.m.
- * **Lake Michigan**
April 21, 2022, 7-9 p.m.
- * **Lake Huron: Offshore**
April 28, 2022, 6-8 p.m.



Northern Lake Huron
By Captain Rick Konecke - MCBA Director

New Boat Engine Cutoff Switch Law Goes Into Effect April 1 2021

Applies to boats less than 26 feet op-

erating on plane or above displacement speed.

There are new engine cutoff device wear requirements for recreational boat operators as part of the January 1, 2021, passage of National Defense Authorization Act that included a U.S. Coast Guard Reauthorization. These devices, commonly referred to as engine cutoff switches (ECOS), are designed to prevent a boat-strike injury if an operator is accidentally ejected overboard while underway.

Engine cutoff devices can be located at the helm of the boat or on the tiller or body of an outboard engine and typically connect a boat's operator to the cutoff switch with a lanyard. Some ECOS devices eliminate the lanyard and rely on wireless proximity devices to shut down an engine if the operator goes overboard.


The new law requires a vessel operator to use either a helm or outboard lanyard or wireless ECOS on certain vessels less than 26 feet when traveling on plane or above displacement speed. These vessels include (1) boats that have a functioning engine cutoff device installed at the helm or on an outboard engine or have wireless ECOS, or (2) boats manufactured beginning January 2020. The Coast Guard increased the number of boats required to have ECOS installed after this date in an effort to reduce boating accidents and fatalities.

Exceptions to the ECOS requirement include if the main helm of the vessel is in an enclosed cabin or the vessel is not operating on plane or at displacement speed. Low-speed activities such as fishing or docking do not require use of an ECOS. The vessel operator is also exempt if the boat's motor produces less than 115 lbs. of static thrust or about the size of a 2-hp engine.

The new law applies to all federally navigable waterways. As this is a federal law,

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states do not have the ability to enforce the new ECOS regulation BoatUS expects most states to amend their regulations to match federal law over the coming years. While boat operators who fail to follow the new requirement could face a \$100 civil penalty for the first offense, BoatUS expects the U.S. Coast Guard's initial focus will be education. 



Upper Peninsula

By Captain Jim LaBeske - MCBA Director

Greetings from the Keweenaw

In Northwestern U.P., we have had quite an accumulation of snow to date. Keweenaw County could break the 300-inch mark. Some have figured out a way to deal with where to put it. They Blow it back up on the roof that they shoveled it off in February! When charter clients ask, "how much snow do you get?" I tell them "If the forecast says a 50% chance of snow... it means it will snow for 12 hours"!

Those brave enough to battle the elements associated with ice fishing have been rewarded with decent success on inland lakes for Crappie, Walleye and Northern Pike. Keweenaw Bay has also been yielding decent catches of Whitefish, Herring and Perch as well as some Lake Trout, Coho, Splake and Steelhead.

We attended the annual Winter Fish Fry Potluck at the Ottawa Sportsmen's Club and enjoyed the fresh Whitefish, Rainbow Trout and Smelt donated by members. Smelt, caught on hook and line through the ice are a special firm and sweet treat.

From the Michigan DNR website... For hook-and-line fishing: a legislative change, made at the end of 2018, now affects anglers targeting smelt in Michigan. This change consists of the removal of a provision in state statute that allowed anglers to

use any number of hooks attached to a single line in the Great Lakes or recognized smelt waters for taking smelt, alewife or other baitfish.

Anglers will now be allowed to use no more than three lines per person with no more than six hooks or lures on all lines when fishing for these species. All hooks attached to an artificial bait or "night crawler harness" are counted as one hook (note: for crappie/perch rigs and umbrella rigs each hook is counted as part of the total six allowed). This means anglers may use up to six hooks on one line or spread the six hooks out over up to three lines.

- * An update for the Buffalo Reef Restoration. For the complete article michigan.gov/mienvironment/0,9349,7-385-90161-574585--y_2021,00.html



(This MI Environment story is courtesy of John Pepin at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.)

"The Multiagency Buffalo Reef Task Force has made several advances in its efforts to learn more about the natural 2,200-acre Lake Superior reef and continues its collaborative work to protect this lake trout and lake whitefish spawning area".

An item that I found interesting was Egg-trap cylinders, what they are and what to do if you find one.

For the complete article use link above.

March is maintenance and preparation time.

Check expiration dates and condition of flares and fire extinguishers.

Clean and lube reels and re-spool lines. Inspect rod guides and windings. Pits in cork rod handles can be repaired with wood filler paste. Clean lures/spoons and

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inspect, sharpen or replace hooks as needed.

If you tie or assemble your own jigs, crawler harnesses or flies make more than you think you will need so you are not forced to do it the evening before a charter.

I searched the Michigan DNR Fish Stocking Database for plants in Lake Superior in 2021.

There were six plants of Splake in Alger, Keweenaw and Ontonagon Counties totaling 58,701 fish.

I then searched the Wisconsin Database for Lake Superior but for only the four counties that border it.

63,963 were Splake, 82,521 Lake Trout, 119,769 Walleye and 172,740 Seeforellen Brown Trout for 329,993 fish of 10 plants.

Tie good knots and watch the weather Good Luck in 2022 




Central Lake Michigan
By Captain George Freeman
MCBA Director

On February 23, 2022, Governor signed into law House Bill 4149 that makes minor fishing infractions a civil offense only. The bill repeals criminal sanctions for a person who is ice fishing and fails to attach his or her name and address to tip-ups, or regular fishing with more than the authorized number of lines. These violations would instead be subject to fines up to \$150.00. The bill was passed unanimously by both the House and Senate and went into effect when the Governor signed it into law.

The Annual Ludington Big King Bonanza will be held again in 2022. It will be expanded with more categories and more opportunities to win cash and prizes. More info to come on Captain Chucks II web-

site and Facebook page.

Michigan Sea Grant will be hosting an online Lake Michigan fisheries workshop on April 21, 2022 7:00 to 9:00 PM. The registration deadline is April 20, 2022, 12:00 AM. Contact Dan O'Keefe at okeefed@msu.edu for more information.

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 Tony Radjenovich -
MCBA Director

Think Spring! Captains I hope you are all eager to get out on the water and start the 2022 season off better than ever. Before we get to busy with our fishing season, I want to remind all the captains of Northern Lake Michigan to save the date, October 15th, 2022, to come celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Michigan Charter Boat Association in Lansing.

As usual we will have challenges to overcome and opportunities to celebrate in any given year. My biggest challenge this year is working with the MDNR Consent Decree negotiating team. Because I have signed a confidentiality agreement, I cannot divulge the content of the proposals I have reviewed nor relay the comments I have provided to the MDNR. I can tell you that I have represented the interest of recreational anglers to the best of my ability. I don't know if the successor agreement will allow us to fish like we have since 1985 or not. When the negotiations are over, and the new document is signed, fishing in the treaty ceded waters of the Great Lakes for the recreational angler may be very different than how it is now. I hope for the best.

I know that it is very important to have all charter captains represented, therefore if you know of a captain who is not in the MCBA please invite them to join. Give them my number if they have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. I hope to see some of you at the Charlevoix Area Trout Tournament June 10th-12th. This will be my 1st time attending and it sounds like a good time for everyone. The Lake Michigan Citizen's Fishery Advisor Committee spring meeting will be held April 5th, 2022. The proposed agenda is:

1. Review of Lake Committee Meeting information (i.e. prey fish assessments, lake-wide harvest, predator/prey, mass marking, and lake trout.
2. Steelhead data, regulation changes, and future assessments.
3. Chinook salmon stocking plans for 2022 and 2023.
4. Creel and Charter Boat data review.

I hope to give you an update in the next edition of the Cannonball. 



Retiree's View over the Transom
By Captain Jim Fenner

I hope that Covid is in our wake and it will not be driving the boat in 2022. There is a lot going on now in Michigan and the MCBA is up to its proverbial neck in difficult and thorny issues. At the same time, we are beginning the Celebration of the 50 years of the MCBA. A committee has been organized to spread the news of the 50th Anniversary, online, in print and other ways; and to prepare for a special 50th Anniversary Fall celebration meeting. As part of the preparation, the history of the Association is being updated with information from all the Presidents in office since the original history of the Association that covered the first

twenty years: 1972 until 1992. There's been a 'lot of water over the proverbial dam' in the thirty years since then and we are attempting to find, recall and remember all that's happened during those years; to record in writing our history to the present day. Any of the 12 past-presidents who are reading this who have not sent in your information are encouraged to please do so as soon as possible. We want to be sure to include your efforts and successes. Without you, our history will not be accurate or complete. Please send it directly to me, and I will see that it is included and written into the updated history: fennerjl@mac.com. Thanks.

Let's look now to the present: The Association can't seem to catch a break: During the 37 years since I joined the Association, there have never been more issues to face than there are right now. The consent decree negotiations have been extended again; rumors suggest it is not going well at all, and like the proverbial Ground Hog Day, I am writing about same issues I wrote of last spring. Nevertheless, this continues to be, by far, the most important issue for the Association from now until a new decree is signed. I don't understand and can't learn because of the confidentially agreement the MCBA made to be amicus curiae to the negotiations; the dragging on and dragging on has begun to suggest to me the top brass of the DNR and the State of Michigan negotiators may not be up to the job of protecting our precious Great Lakes fishery from the goals of the tribes. I hope we do not see some kind of surrender, allowing more gill nets in Lakes Michigan and Huron. In addition, I am beginning to wonder if these DNR and state negotiators might agree to another decades-long decree with the same weak tribal law enforcement terms that we have had to endure throughout the 35 years of the first two consent decrees.

For me, hope springs eternal that we can keep the gill nets out. Too much money and effort has been spent over the decades getting the gill nets out for us to surrender to the gill-netters now. In addition, we need to reach a much stronger system of penalties for decree violations.

Another 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. The issue seems to be dormant just now, but it has not disappeared. Vigilance is required here.

Hanging over all our Environmental heads is the continuing line 5 pipeline issue. The state ordered line 5 to be shut down by May 12, 2021 but Enbridge, aided by the State Chamber and other corporate interests, have managed to keep it operating, despite the very real risk of its rupturing and destroying the Great Lakes. It should be noted that less than 5% of the product moving under the straights is even used in Michigan. The risk far outweighs the reward.



The MCBA is actively involved in confronting all of these issues, and more, as well 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 will be made. We all have an overwhelming interest in seeing that our lakes are safe and our fishery are protected, and well managed.

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 and for the environment.

I hope that as the season develops and Covid fades away, we will again be able to gather in groups, to debate, discuss, and decide the future of our Great Lakes and our fishery; and to share time with our friends and colleagues. In addition, with hard work by our members, officers and friends, perhaps we can help to make these issues 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 and of course at our 50th Anniversary Celebration in the fall. 🐟

The 2022 MCBA Annual Conference and 50th Celebration will be held the weekend of October 14, 15 and 16, 2022 at The Radisson® Hotel Lansing at the Capitol. \$109.00 a night, for reservations: 800-333-3333
radisson.com/lansingmi - Promotional Code: MCBA22 🐟



Upcoming Board Meetings

- **April 24, 2022** - Clare, MI
Doherty Hotel - 10:00 am
- **Sept 25, 2022** - Clare, MI
Doherty Hotel - 10:00 am
- **Oct. 16, 2022** - Lansing, MI
Radisson Hotel Lansing - 10:00 am.

All board meetings are open to all MCBA members who would like to attend. Doherty Hotel address: 604 N McEwan St, Clare, MI 48617

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. 🐟

DNR Fisheries News

Donna Wesander, DNR Fisheries
Charter Reporting Program
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Mobile phone 231-330-2845



2021 Charter Results.

Great news, the charter industry has bounced back and even improved when compared to those years immediately preceding the infamous year 2020 due to covid concerns. Here are a few 2021 charter fishing data highlights hot off the compiled charter trips database. In April 2021, there were 571 charter operations reporting for 663 boats and by year end of 2021, there were 607 charter businesses reporting for 711 charter boats. These charter operators reported on 22,474 charter trips (excursions) for State of Michigan navigable waters; 5,400 more than in 2020, and over 3,000 more than 2019 (pre-covid)! Trips reported for lakes, including connected waters: Lakes Michigan (14,298 trips), Huron (2,690 trips), the St. Clair system (3,562 trips), Erie (1,170 trips), and Lake Superior (754 trips). The excursions had a total of 86,340 anglers and 478,891 angler hours. Total charter harvest by species: Chinook (24,820 fish), Coho salmon (13,812 fish), Lake Trout (69,270 fish), Rainbow Trout/Steelhead (7,287 fish), Brown Trout (172 fish), and walleye (68,099 fish). The Yellow Perch harvest of 24,908 fish shows a continued increase when compared to 2020 (19,244 fish) and 2019 (8,605 fish). For the predominantly catch-release species, anglers released 33,874 smallmouth bass (plus harvested 1,525 smallmouth), released 1,109 Musky, and released 412 Lake Sturgeon.

Charter Monthly Reporting – Online in 2022. The State of Michigan is promoting use of online systems to do business in Michigan; this includes charter-fishing

reporting. All current operators should have received a notification letter in the mail from the DNR within the last month stating that monthly charter reporting will now be online via the reporting system called FACTS; paper reporting is no longer an option as of January 2022. 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 us if you need to set up your online reporting account or have forgotten your current login information. Charter fishing operators may contact MDNR-Fisheries Division to acquire assistance with the online reporting requirements, we are available to help you understand and use the features of the online reporting system. Please call 231-330-2845 for assistance, this is a cell phone and can accept/send text messages.

Reminders

- * All charter-fishing reporters must report non-fishing months when you were not actively fishing.
- * As everyone will be reporting online this year, no annual forms packets will be sent.
- * There are fines and penalties, which can be imposed for failure to report or not reporting within the timelines defined by statute.
- * Landline phones at the DNR Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station are no long-

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er in use; the office staff now have cell phones.

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.

I bid you all a Farewell

This will be my last time providing you this information; I am retiring from the DNR effective May 1, 2022. It has been my pleasure to assist you - the captains and charter businesses in Michigan. The charter fishing industry in Michigan has been part of my life for 29 years. In a way I think those days and years were like charter fishing trips: anticipation of what the day would bring, up early, preparation for the customers, some days with great catches, some with little or none, some throw backs, sur-

prise catches, once in a lifetime catch, new customers, return customers, not so great weather, spectacular weather, tumultuous seas, calm seas, unexpected events, memories of a lifetime - I certainly will miss it. I learned so much from all of you. Thank you for your information, cooperation, and some great fish stories.

I wish you a safe, healthy, enjoyable, and prosperous fishing season. Fish On! 🐟

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The next issue of the Cannonball Gazette will be published in June. Submissions must be in by May 28, 2022