



# cannonball G A Z E T T E



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## ANNUAL MEETING WRAP-UP

MCBA HONORS KAKUSKA AND AVERY (page 7)

### New Catch Reporting Requirements for Charter's

**Greetings MCBA!** We were glad to see many of you at the annual meeting in Holland this past October. We discussed many issues and upcoming changes at the annual meeting, so we wanted to follow up our presentations with this article. For starters, we were happy to work with MCBA on adding the catch reporting committee into **SB441**. That bill brings the state into compliance with the new reporting requirements for charter, commercial, and wholesale fisheries contained within the 2023 Decree. Chief Claramunt announced that Chris Kemp and I (Kendra Kozlauskos) will be the two representatives on the catch



reporting committee for Fisheries Division. Joining us are Denny Grinold and Bill Winowiecki as the initial MCBA representatives. The committee kicked off on December 11th, and we agreed to meet annually in December, and as needed the remainder of the year. We are planning to next get together in March, 2024.

The topics that we discussed at the initial catch reporting committee were **(1)** elimination of departure port and reduction of fishing locations in the reporting system, **(2)** eliminating the reporting of the number of attached sea lamprey, and **(3)** transition

(Continued on page 2)

- 2024 Sport Shows . . . . . 3
- From The Helm . . . . . 4
- Secretary's Report . . . . . 6
- Directors Port Report . . . . . 8
- A View from over the Transom . . . 13
- SEA K'S LICENSING LORE . . . . . 16

(Continued from page 1) . . . **Catch Reporting**

to the new reporting system and passage of HB103-105 which now requires that inland fishing guides be licensed and report their catch (beginning March 2024). I will expand on each of these items.

Beginning with the 2024 fishing season, Great Lakes charter captains will be required to report twice monthly. Due dates for reports will be the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. Since reporting is electronic and instantaneous, there will no longer be a grace period for late reports. Reports will consist of trips taken from the previous due date (Wednesday) to the Tuesday before the current due date. For example, in May of 2024, a report will be due on May 8 (trips that occur April 24 through May 7) and May 22 (trips that occur May 8 through May 21). Twice monthly reporting will be used to inform management decisions at the lake wide level for several species. Similarly, these data will be used to assist the MDNR in answering questions that are important to stakeholders (MCBA etc.). Questions we hope to address include those related to the amount of fishing effort across inshore and deep areas of the Great Lakes and the need to compare Great Lakes charter effort to inland guided fishing effort with the

introduction of **SB103 in 2024.**

Many charter captains use the "Future Reporting Status" feature to report non-fishing during the winter months. Two-week intervals will be available for reporting starting in January. Please log-in in January to report non-fishing for 2024. In January, captains will be offered the usual opportunity to report non-fishing for the next year.

The committee also discussed changes to trip entry which will make that process faster. Starting in January 2024 we will no longer require a departure port. We are also reducing the amount of fishing locations/grids to one allowed per trip. Data summaries used for management now

only use the reported "primary" location. These two changes will reduce the amount of time spent in the Location Details/Map section in FACTS. The requirement to enter attached lamprey for salmon and trout catch has been removed because the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is not using this data to make management decisions or estimations.

The FACTS system will look the same, and the process will be the same, save for the changes discussed above. Enter and save trips for your reporting interval and submit your reports by the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. You still must



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report non-fishing periods.


Finally, the committee discussed new legislation (SB103), which will require inland guides to report their trips to the State just like charter captains do. Inland guides are required to be licensed as of March 2024. Inland guides will be required to purchase a 3-year license, which will be free to current charter captains who fish inland waters. For reporting, inland waters are defined as anything outside of the Great Lakes or connecting waters (St. Marys' River, St. Clair River, and Detroit River). Licenses will not be available at retail vendors, rather they will only be available online. Details on when and how those licenses will be purchased are currently being finalized. The inland guide legislation requires license holders to report every month. This differs from Great Lakes charter captains, who will have to report twice monthly. If you are a current charter captain that fishes anywhere besides the Great Lakes and connecting waters, you will need to apply for an inland license and report inland harvest activity monthly. This will be separate than your twice monthly reporting for trips in the Great Lakes and connecting waters. In practice, if you are a Great Lakes charter captain, who occasionally fishes inland, you will be required to complete three total reports per month in FACTS.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we all navigate these changes in 2024. 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 charter reports. We look forward to working

with the MCBA reporting committee and its members moving forward. Don't hesitate to reach out anytime.

For assistance with reporting, or questions about upcoming changes please contact Kendra Kozlauskos at 231-330-2845 or [DNR-Fish-Charter@michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-Fish-Charter@michigan.gov). Questions on fishery trends and future analyses of charter or inland guide data, contact Chris Kemp at 248-860-3804 or [Kempc5@michigan.gov](mailto:Kempc5@michigan.gov). 

**UPDATES**

 **VISIT MCBA Members Area**  
[MCBAmembers.com](http://MCBAmembers.com)

## 2024 Sport Shows


by Captain Richard Haslett  
Past MCBA President



We will be doing the shows again and have signed the contracts for the 2024 season. We will need Captains willing to donate a free trip to the simulator winners. Doing three shows we need 6 trips for us to give away. Please remember that you will receive \$200 for fuel after the trip has been run and all donating Captains will be able to display their brochures at the three shows we participate in. All proceeds from the shows and cookbook sales go into the MCBA scholarship fund.

### SHOW DATES:

- Ultimate Fishing Show/Novi  
January 11-14, 2024
- Outdoorama/Novi February 22-25, 2024
- Ultimate Sport Show/Grand Rapids  
March 7-10, 2024

Please contact me if you would like to donate for the 2024 shows. 

Captain Rich Haslett  
[taloncharters@gmail.com](mailto:taloncharters@gmail.com)



## FROM THE HELM . . .

By Captain Bill Winowiecki  
President  
Michigan Charter Boat Association



the previous decree the state spent 17 million dollars buying out state licensed commercial fisherman trap nets. These trap net operations were given to the tribes, along with expanded access to waters the state

licensed commercial fishermen had been using. The trap net program is now being de-emphasized and replaced with what is now known as 'selective' gill nets. Now I ask, "What are selective gill nets?"

Also, in a major change from the past, Instead of using the charter boat industries 35 years of monthly catch reports as leverage in the negotiations the state team decided to mandate 2 week reporting in an effort to require the tribes to report on the same schedule. Even though the state did not enforce the reporting requirements which were in the 2000 consent decree.

The relatively new DNR tribal Coordination Unit Supervisor has been going to the sport fishing community meetings explaining what a great deal this decree is. These meetings have not been helpful. We continue to believe the new CD is actually a really bad deal.

When the Judge issued his order in August the Coalition was given the option to appeal his ruling. On September 20th the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources filed its appeal. It will be some time before the outcome of our appeal is known. We will continue to seek better solutions to the issues and changes which we believe are necessary to have an acceptable new consent decree.

A new issue has developed in the state legislature known as HB-5108. Now that gill nets have been deemed 'selective', the state licensed commercial fishing industry wants to use them to harvest

As we wind down the year and reflect on the issues of the recent past I have to begin by saying the past year has been a really tough year for

the charter fishing industry, myself and MCBA board. The approval by the Federal Judge of a new contentious consent decree has to be at the top of the list of difficult issues.

When the negotiations began some four years ago, we believed that the state negotiating team was in a pretty good position to update and refresh the existing decree. The tribes and the sports fishing groups were getting along even with the crash of white fish. Everybody was managing to catch fish. Maybe not as many as they wanted, due to the invasives, but good enough. There had been some major violations in the 2000 decree including some issues with non-reporting, illegal gill nets, and nets that were not marked properly. Issues we believed could be easily resolved in an updated decree. Even when the sports fishing groups went over their TAC's we were able to work through it.

Sadly, our expectations for a simple update to the existing decree were soon dashed, and after much debate and discussion during which our input was limited and frequently disregarded, a radically different consent decree was created; totally different from the one that we had lived with for the past 23 years. The new consent decree expands gill netting through-out the tribal ceded waters, diminishing the previously agreed to method of fishing with trap nets. For

*(Continued on page 5)*

previously protected sport fish.

The walleye in Saginaw Bay are at the top of that list along with perch, bass and lake trout. The proposed legislation would allow up to a 25% take of all sport fish. The new Consent Decree prohibits state commercial fishing in tribal ceded waters, so any new commercial fishing would only be allowed in traditional sport fishing areas.

The commercial fishing lobby feels that a 25% harvest is sustainable within the allocation set by the DNR. The allocation studies in the tribal ceded waters are still inaccurate and being updated.

Most people in our government and our legislators don't have a clue what all this means. They depend on the people in the DNR for the science and biology to make these decisions and advise them. This is one of the reasons for maintaining a good relationship with the DNR is so important.

The state licensed commercial fishing industry with only 13 licensed operations have plans to expand and add more fishers. These commercial fishers haven't put a dime into the efforts to rehabilitate walleye and lake trout. But they have hired skillful lobbyists and have donated heavily to some politicians to sway public opinion for acceptance of new laws which could lead to over harvesting what is already a declining fishery. It would also be a major change to long established sport fishing values and considerations.

The commercial fishermen's' slogan is "everybody in Michigan should be able to enjoy eating great lakes fish" as they lobbied our legislatures with fresh cooked and smoked fish at the Capital. I've seen way too many of the promos put out by the Michigan Fish Producers. Each sport fish has a monetary value. One 6 lb. lake trout equals out to 4 lbs. of

fillets. Twelve dollars a pound fresh puts that fish at a value of \$48.00 for the commercial fisherman. Which is a good profit with little investment. It is estimated that the state wide commercial fishery might have a 13 million dollar annual value. This pales in comparison to the 2 billion dollar value to the state if the same fish is caught by a sports fisherman. The sport fishing industry creates thousands of jobs of every kind in cities all over the state. This proposed legislation would likely eliminate many of those jobs.

We also have a new Fisheries Chief. He's come in on probably one of the most challenging periods in our Great Lakes History. Chief Randy Claramunt has his work cut out for him. We will be working with him and all in the fish division to continue our decades of successful cooperation.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is SB-441, known as the charter boat act. In the previous bill we were included in the decision making process. When the new Charter boat act was introduced, the MCBA had been totally excluded.. After discussions between Chief Randy Claramunt, Denny Grinold and myself SB-441 was amended to contain new wording that now includes the Michigan Charter Boat Association in a committee that will be tasked to review and make recommendations on catch reporting and reporting updates.

I know that the charter industry and the sports fisher organizations want to improve our relationship with the DNR. We want to work with you, but you truly have to understand, we feel we've been dis-respected, dis-regarded and on some occasions, have been told untruthful things, especially during the consent decree negotiations.

(Continued from page 5). . . . **From the Helm**

We need to move on, working more together. We now have this commercial fishing legislation that would allow state licensed commercial fishermen 25% of all sport fish. We need some help on dealing with this legislation.

We, the MCBA, would like to be included in a committee with the Coalition and DNR to monitor allocations and accurate reporting within the guidelines of the Tribal Decree. Currently, we are not included. We hope we can work together on that also.

In summary, the future of the charter fishing industry in some jeopardy, with several major issues that could lead to big problems in the next several years. We hope and pray that we are not at the beginning of a big downward spiral like in the 1940's and 50's when commercial fishing virtually wiped out the Great Lakes. If we all; the charter industry, the sport fishing organizations, and the DNR work together I strongly believe we can head this off before it happens. Let's do it. 🐟

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Captain John Giszczak



The Association is in desperate need of your help. Currently we need two members to step up and volunteer to represent the MCBA members in their area.

Specifically, we need a Director for the Southern Lake Huron region; an area which covers Saginaw Bay south to the Blue Water Bridge. That position is currently vacant. There is also a need for a director for the Lake Erie/Lk St. Clair region soon, due to the planned retirement from that position by the current director. We also need port captains in all areas of the state. These are key positions in the MCBA and unless they are filled, the many issues related to events in those regions may not be properly handled by the board. Being a director isn't hard, or overly complicated, but it's important and the Association can't function properly without a full complement of directors from all areas of the state.

As noted, it's not that hard to be a director. Most of the MCBA business is done by email, phone or zoom. There are 4 board meetings per year: three in person, with the fourth, a January

meeting, being by zoom. Our Annual meeting is a one day event. Some of the expenses (fuel, lunch) incurred to attend all meetings as a director are reimbursed by the Association.

The benefits of being a board member are many. It's a great way to learn what's going on all over the state and to meet and become friends and colleagues with great fishermen also from all parts of the state. It's a great way to get to know and deal on a personal basis with the top brass and leaders in the DNR and policy makers. And of course, to help set the policy for the MCBA, and deal with all that managing such an important organization entails.

Over the past few weeks, I've heard from many members complaining about the DNR and legislators making decisions that will seriously hurt our businesses. I've received lots of phone calls and lots of emails about the situation, but sadly, not one was willing to step up and get involved to help the Association and yourself confront these challenges. While we need directors, we need more than that. We need you all as members to care, to listen, to ask questions and to express your opinions in person at the Association meetings.

(Continued from page 6) . . . **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

During our annual conferences the top brass from the fisheries division are always present to talk to us in person, as are the legislators, yet sadly, not enough members have been showing up to prove that we mean business. Low attendance makes us look weak and gives the appearance that we don't care that much about protecting our businesses. It also makes it that much more difficult for us to be taken seriously by those who make the decisions that affect our businesses. They take advantage of us looking weak.

It's easy to sit around and complain but with a little effort on your part, we have a chance of saving our way of life for the future. You can do your part by offering to be a director, a port captain, or when you can, show up and demonstrate that you care about your business.

Please contact me. I would be happy to talk to you about joining our team fighting to save your business.

Finally, a reminder. As you know; It's that time of year, please don't procrastinate. Fill out your 2024 membership application by the end of the year. Don't let your membership lapse. 🐟

## ANNUAL MEETING WRAP-UP

### MCBA HONORS KAKUSKA; AVERY

**The Pistis Award** was established in honor of Chuck Pistus who was the Sea Grant advisor to the Michigan Charter Boat Association. He helped establish the Coast Watch system for the charter industry and assisted on studies on the economic value the charter industry provides to the State of Michigan. This award goes out to someone who truly supports the charter industry or somebody who outstandingly protects the fishery and natural resources for generation to come.

**The 2023 Pistis Award** recipient is a 25 year Veteran of the United States Coast Guard. His last duty assignment was as chief of the Regional Examination Center in Toledo, Ohio. A recognized expert in the field of Maritime Licensing Service.

He has been assisting the Members of



(L—R) Captain Bill Winowiecki—MCBA President  
Lt. Commander, USCG (retired)  
Charles "Chuck" Kakuska

the Michigan Charter Boat Association for over 20 years. All of us are very Thankful to have Chuck to come to the rescue with our Maritime credentials.

Thank you Charles "Chuck" Kakuska from all of us that you have assisted.

Please accept the 2023 Pistis Award in your honor. 🐟

**Our next award recipient** grew up in West Michigan.

He started out as a news reporter and videographer for a local TV station.

Eventually that experience evolved into the Outdoor Magazine TV Show. A couple of

(Continued on page 8)



(Continued from page 7) . . . **Directors Report**

his most memorable interviews have been Fred Bear and Mort Neff the pioneers of Outdoor television.

Mike Avery's Outdoor Magazine program started more than 25 years ago. Mike is the host and producer. His work has been honored by Michigan Association of Broadcasters.

Mike has been at the fore front of all hunting and fishing controversial issues. Trying to educate the public on what is right for our resources. He asks the hard question and doesn't always agree with the DNR and Legislators.


That's what makes him a great candidate for this award.



(L—R) MCBA President Captain Bill Winowiecki  
MCBA Captain Mike Avery

**The 2023 MCBA Award** goes to a member of the Michigan Charter Boat Association, who dedicates their time to promoting and protecting our state fisheries. Mike Avery truly meets the criteria. 🐟

**UPDATES**

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**MCBAmembers.com**

## DIRECTORS' PORT REPORTS

### Southern Lake Michigan

by Captain Holly Engel  
MCBA Director

### 2023 MCBA Fall Conference Update

Summertime in Saugatuck is well in the rear-view mirror and winter has set in! The Best Chance boats had a great season this year, fishing primarily out of Saugatuck and Best Chance Too following the tournament trail. This upcoming year marks 10 years for me running charters on the SW lakeshore. It seems, the older we get, the quicker the seasons fly by!

Our fall conference held at the Haworth Hotel in Holland held an immense amount of information for anglers! If you did not attend, why? I'd love to hear what is holding you back. The annual conference is for **YOUR BENEFIT!** Get involved, come, learn about the fishery and what changes are coming. You will not regret it! In years prior, the conference was a 3-day event. This year, we moved it to a 1-day event due to the costs involved. It was an extremely productive day packed with the new Chief of fisheries and DNR Basin Coordinators provided updates from the Great Lakes statewide. Steve Shultz provided an in-depth update on the tribal consent decree. Kendra Kozlauskos provided changes coming to our online required catch reporting for 2024. Chuck Kakuska provided updates on maritime licensing and some "do's" and "do not's" when filing for an initial license or renewing your license. Dr. Chris Vandergoot provided updates on the walleye tagging program for Lake Erie & Saginaw Bay and Carolyn Foley, Research Director for Sea Grant provided updates on PFAS and the Great Lakes.

I wish you all happy Holiday's ahead, cheers to 2024 - we will all be splashing

(Continued on page 9)



back down springtime (for those of you who do not fish in the winter) sooner than we know! 🐟

### Central Lake Michigan

By Captain George Freeman  
MCBA Director



The Annual Fall MCBA Meeting was held at the Haworth Hotel in Holland. This year it was decided to make the conference a one day event hoping for better attendance. Sadly, despite the excellent program and delicious food the turnout was disappointing. Thank you to President Capt. Bill Winowiecki and Southern Lake Michigan Director Capt. Holly Engle for planning the event. It was one of the best I have attended.

This is my last article as Central Lake Michigan Director. After 15 years serving on the MCBA Board I have decided to step down and make way for a fresh face and new ideas. Capt. Mark Williams is nominated to fill the vacancy pending board approval (nominations are still being accepted) for the position as Director Central Lake Michigan.

I still plan on attending the annual conferences and being an active member of the association. 🐟



### Northern Lake Michigan

By Captain Bruce Shane  
MCBA Director

I hope all is well and everyone is having a great late fall/early winter!

It was a pleasure to attend the MCBA annual meeting in Holland this past October. The reception on Friday evening that was free to all MCBA members featured a prime rib dinner along with a lot of great conversation. Then on Saturday

we had a full agenda that included personnel from Sea Grant, DNR Fisheries Division, Attorney Steve Schultz regarding news on the consent decree, and many other speakers and participants that made it a meeting well worth attending. Special thanks to all MCBA members, speakers, and also the vendors for the raffle that made this meeting a success.

At the meeting DNR fisheries chief Randy Claramunt, along with lake basin coordinators Jay Wesley Lake Michigan, Patrick Hanchin Lake Huron/Superior, and Tod Wills Lake St. Clair all participated in a round table discussion with MCBA members. Below is a list of things I gleaned from the DNR discussion.

- \* The MDNR Hunt Fish App was released November 2022 for Google and Android
- \* Large size 6" Gillnets have been used by Michigan commercial fishermen for rough fish, carp, catfish, etc.
- \* Whitefish recruitment is down due to lack of food and lack of late fall ice cover during spawning
- \* Cisco populations seem to be inversely proportional to Whitefish, DNR biologists suggest that they are not sure why that seems to be the case
- \* Quagga mussel populations are still expanding in deeper water although at a slower rate
- \* 2021 and 2023 were both good years for Alewives, 2022 was not
- \* Salmon size overall appeared to be slightly smaller in 2023 than 2022, but still healthy fish
- \* Only 16% of Coho Salmon planted are caught by Michigan anglers
- \* More pink salmon have been reported in southern lake Michigan catches

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9) . . . over the Transom

\* Calcium deficiency in the water chemistry is the primary reason mussels have not populated Lake Superior to the same extent as Huron and Michigan

Attorney Steve Schultz told the group that the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources has filed the appeal to the entrance of the consent decree. Below are some of the notes I made from Mr. Schultz's discussion of issues regarding the new decree.

\* Lake Trout were never defined as a commercial species in previous decrees

\* Under the new decree using gill nets, taking Whitefish can be Lake Trout bycatch and conversely taking Lake Trout can be Whitefish bycatch and this bycatch will be non-enforceable in regards to catch limits

\* What is bycatch and thrown over the side will not be counted and any species (including Salmon) other than Lake Trout and Whitefish will not be counted

\* Catch rates for Lake Trout and Whitefish will be set for three (3) years and won't be changed irregardless of the health of the fishery

Starting January 2024 charter boat catch reports will be due the first and third Week of each month. The FACTS site is being revised according to Kendra Kozlauskos of the DNR that will accept the new reporting schedule and the revised site should still allow the bulk reporting of non-fishing months or periods. Catch reports in some form, written or electronic will still be required on board the vessel.

Catch limits for Steelhead on certain northern Michigan rivers are going to be reduced starting April 2024. The new limit will be one (1) per day - down from three (3). The affected rivers are the Carp, Manistee, Little Manistee, Muskegon, Rogue, Pere Marquette, Whitefish, White,

(Bear & Prairie Creek – Certain Sections). Michigan Natural Resources Commission approved that change, DNR biologists had suggested the change was not necessary for the health of the fishery.

According to an article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel the Wisconsin DNR is proceeding with a process to allow commercial fishing for Lake Trout in Lake Michigan. Sport Fishermen in Michigan have House Bill 5108 to deal with as it targets Lake Trout, Walleye and other gamefish for commercial fishing. If you have not already done so you need to go to the MUCC website or go to an email sent from MCBA on October 19th, there you will find a method for a person to enter their address and it will direct a letter of concern to your representative, <https://mucc.org/hb-5108-introduced-puts-michigans-fishing-heritage-at-risk/>

According to an article on MLive the Sleeping Bear National Park Service is excavating the Platte river mouth to remove the rocks and sand on both sides (banks) of the river to create a more "Natural" Platte Point beach area. This according to the park service will allow natural currents to form a sandy spit as the river flows eastward into the lake. Unfortunately, this will no doubt inhibit some boats from gaining access to Lake Michigan from the Platte river launch site. This has been a controversial issue since dredging the Platte River mouth ceased in 2017.

Finally, this report is to cover updates from Manistee to the bridge so anyone that would like to provide news for the Cannonball please contact me at [rigandrollcharters@gmail.com](mailto:rigandrollcharters@gmail.com) or 419-356-4317. 🐟

**Happy Holidays to All  
and tight lines in 2024.**



### **Southern Lake Huron**

By Captain Karl Burnside  
MCBA Vice President

It was another good season of fishing on Lake Huron. Fishing was consistent on Saginaw Bay throughout the spring and first half of summer. By late summer moving up to the Charity Islands and Sand Point area continued to produce excellent results with some impressive sized Walleye. I am already looking to next season with anticipation of another great year.

The fall conference held in Holland at Hope College was excellent. Our guest speakers all knocked it out of the park and shared great information. I found the one day conference just as informative and valuable as the past traditional three day conference. If there was one thing that would improve the fall conference, it would be member participation. I expected to see more members present given the conference's location in Holland. Sadly, that was not the case.

The MCBA held a business meeting at the end of the conference which included MCBA Officer Elections. I was nominated, and accepted, the position of Vice President for the MCBA, replacing Rich Haslett. I want to thank Rich for his years of service to the MCBA as Vice President. He set a high standard for excellence, and I have some big shoes to fill. I look forward to working with President Bill Winowiecki and the Board of Directors in the New Year to address and find solutions to the many issues we face in our industry.

Captain Bill Dunk is nominated to fill the vacancy pending board approval (nominations are still being accepted) for the position as Director Southern Lake Huron.

Many of you in the Thumb area of Michigan already know Bill. Bill brings with him a diverse background of not only the charter industry, but the maritime industry as a whole. I could not think of a better candidate to suggest for the position of Director of Southern Lake Huron. Bill will be attending our board meeting in January of 2024, and I believe at that time the board will also conclude that Bill is the right person, at the right time, to serve on the MCBA Board of Directors.

As a member, the MCBA needs your participation and voice more than ever. The Tribal Consent Decree will need close attention as it is put into effect. Proposed bills such as Michigan house bill 5108 now threaten non-tribal waters across the State. Non-Tribal commercial gill nets will be allowed in places that have not had such activity in many decades. The proposed limit catches on game fish with those nets are unacceptable.

The MCBA Officers and Board of Directors stand to do what is necessary to voice opposition to this disastrous proposed legislation. But we can't do it without your participation! As an MCBA member, we need you to make a New Year's resolution to actively participate in our organization for the good of our State and the charter fishing industry.

I wish you all a safe and enjoyable holiday season. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me at (810) 513-6073. 🐟



### **Upper Peninsula**

By Captain Jim LaBeske - MCBA Director

### **Greetings from the Keweenaw**

Mother Nature rarely provides weather that makes everyone happy. This fall has been no exception as snow came early to the Keweenaw but melted before deer

(Continued on page 12)



season and did not snow again until December. The relatively warm temperatures allowed those fishing to venture out (most on foot) as boats were put up for the season. Those trailering smaller boats were able to get on the water as ice had not formed on Lake Superior or the larger inland lakes and had good success.

The lack of snow and warm temperatures did not bode well for deer hunters. The general consensus was the worst season in many many years with some hunting several days without seeing a deer. The weather however was not the only contributing factor. Many I spoke with had more predators on their cameras than deer. My friend said he had 13 wolves around his stand at one time. And another had a cougar on camera that frequented his area. No one in their camp saw a hair for 5 days. The South Range Lounge and VFW held their Big Buck contest, my Friend won, he was the only one to bring in a Buck! My wife Tammy was one of the few lucky enough to bag a Buck. Hunting north of Iron Mountain she shot a 7 pointer at 7:31 AM Central Time on opening day. Her shot was the first heard in the morning, unlike in the years past, when the norm was 25+ by that time.

The link is one that covers the Arctic Grayling project.

[https://www.mlive.com/news/2016/06/michigan\\_grayling\\_reintroducti.html](https://www.mlive.com/news/2016/06/michigan_grayling_reintroducti.html)

Reading the article, it mentions catch and release, previously prohibited, would NOW be allowed. I'm troubled that there's no mention of using barbless or circle hooks to prevent injury. Case in point... This year in Lake Superior around the Keweenaw Peninsula, we had a lot of juvenile Pink Salmon that were very aggressive, like the Arctic Grayling are. In early July the Pinks were 12 to 14 inches long and the incidentally caught fish could not ethically be released, as most had hooks in their gills and eyeballs. Many anglers thought they were Coho but the spots on Pinks tails are oval as opposed to the round spots on Coho. This lead to early limiting comprising 1/2 of the total bag, with not much meat to show for it. I switched out the trebles to circle hooks and on future trips, most were able to be released.

I learned about circle hooks on my first Trip to Hawaii in 1999 and I'm a strong advocate of their use. I use them fishing live bait for panfish and even tie them on my nightcrawler harnesses back hooks using a "Mickey Mouse" Knot. I also advocate circle hooks for fishing stream trout to avoid gut hooking fish under size fish. They are the only hooks permitted on Long Lines and Reef Bottom Fishing in the


(Continued on page 13)

### From The Michigan DNR fish stocking database 2023 to date.

County	Water Body	Site Name	Species	Date	Number	Operation	Avg. Length
Alger	West Johns Lake West Johns Lake (48N 13W 26)	West Johns Lake	Arctic grayling	11/08/23	198	State Plant	12.05
Alger	West Johns Lake West Johns Lake (48N 13W 26)	West Johns Lake	Arctic grayling	11/08/23	198	State Plant	9.94
Houghton	Penegor Lake PENEGORE LAKE (49N 36W 30)	PENEGORE LAKE	Arctic grayling	11/09/23	148	State Plant	12.05
Houghton	Penegor Lake PENEGORE LAKE (49N 36W 30)	PENEGORE LAKE	Arctic grayling	11/09/23	150	State Plant	9.94
Manistee	Pine Lake		Arctic grayling	11/20/23	234	State Plant	12.05
Manistee	Pine Lake		Arctic grayling	11/20/23	871	State Plant	9.94

ocean because...as they almost always hook fish in the corner of the mouth allowing for live release.

**Time to renew** your MCBA membership AND also recruit new members!!!

Remember to clean your lures and tackle, check the guides on your rods & put new line on your reels. 

## **Merry Christmas and a Happy and Promising New Year!**



### **Retiree's View over the Transom**

By Captain Jim Fenner  
MCBA Secretary, 2008 - 2012

It's hard to know what to say as we wind up the year 2023. It was perhaps the most difficult year that I can remember in my 28 years as a MCBA member. Perhaps it's best to start by thanking the President Bill Winowiecki, and all the members of the board who struggled to confront and deal with the several extreme challenges they have faced this year. More challenges and even more serious challenges than any time since the contentious years of 1983-84 when, prior to the first consent decree, the Association nearly collapsed when the members were assessed a fee to help pay our legal bills. Thanks to the board members during those contentious years who had the courage to confront the issues of the day, and who made it possible in many ways for us to have the successful chartering businesses we enjoy today.

For the past two or three years the current board has faced equally difficult tasks. In fact, in some ways, it's been even harder, as in addition to the very difficult Consent Decree issue, they've had to deal with major changes to the Charter Boat

Act, and a continuing full-on effort by the commercial fishing industry to take a substantial portion of the fish we depend on for our lively-hood. All of these issues and more. While I'm retired, I continue to work closely with our board, having been there in my active fishing years. I see and know how hard their job has been and how much work they've done to at least minimize the damage. And the work is not done! We are appealing the CD. We are confronting the reporting requirements. We are struggling to keep our sport fish from commercial nets. There is a lot more to do and no guarantee that we will prevail on any of these issues.

Frankly the board needs your help! Your active support and positive comments would be a start. I can speak from personal experience, it's not helpful when you're working as hard as you can on an almost impossible task when you receive negative phone calls and emails. It hurts, and it's discouraging. If you can't find a way to bring yourself to help, you can at least thank those who are doing the work for you.

Some of the officers and board members have served many years, and are tired, and wish to step away. New board members and port captains are needed. Currently there is a vacancy for a board member to represent Southern Lake Huron. Other vacancies may occur later this year. If you've been around for a while, and you care, and you want to help, make yourself available to be a Port Captain or maybe a board member.

Even if you can't commit at this level, support the ones who represent you. Make a commitment to attend a future MCBA meeting. Surely, if you think about it, your charter business is worth the price of missing a day of hunting or of working on storing your boat, or even missing a

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13) . . . **over the Transom**

charter. I know I missed a few in my day and survived in spite of it.

If no one is willing to make at least this level of commitment to the Association in the next year or two; and if everyone continues to say, "let somebody else do it"; it's quite possible the MCBA as we know it today will cease to exist. I've seen the trend, and it's not encouraging.

Please take this seriously. Look inside yourself; am I doing enough to help the association protect my business? Ask yourself, what can I do to help? Do I care enough to attend a meeting? Or to be a port captain, or maybe even offer to be a board member? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, great! Now make a plan, or make a call. You won't be sorry. And the Association will be the better for it.

Tight lines, and God Bless us all in this season of love. 🐟

## Senate Bill 0441 (2023) Michigan Legislature

**SB-441**, also known as the Charter Boat, has passed and is now in effect and is being implemented. Every active Captain has by now received notice of how and when the new reporting program is supposed to work.

When the Charter Boat act was originally written years ago, the Michigan Charter Boat Association and the DNR worked together to create the reporting system to help the DNR properly manage the biology on the Great Lakes. As originally proposed, the new Charter Boat act removed the MCBA from having any input, however we fought hard, and new Chief of Fisheries, Randy Claramunt, had the bill amended to include the MCBA again. We will now be able to

participate in discussions of some parts of the act, but unfortunately, some things in the new act can't be changed due to the overlapping provisions of the new Federal Tribal Decree.

The history of the two week reporting requirement is long and complicated and came about partly due to the failure of the state to enforce the reporting provisions in the 2000 Consent Decree, and so, for this and other reasons, the State negotiating team pushed for two week reporting in the new CD. The Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources attempted to convince the State and Feds to use the 35 years of Charter Boat reporting data as leverage to negotiate a better deal, but the state negotiators weren't interested. Finally things fell apart between the State negotiating team, and the Coalition to the point that the State would no longer share honest information. Following that the Coalition was removed from the Tribal Negotiations altogether.

From then on, the Coalition, which includes the MCBA, didn't know what was in the proposed Tribal Decree until it was sent to the Judge last December. We had an idea that we would be stuck with reporting every two (2) weeks, however, we had no idea that it would be the 2nd and the 4th Wednesday of every month.

This is the way it's written in the Tribal Decree. The MCBA didn't have any input as to how the two week reporting would be applied and implemented.

As all of us know, the new Tribal Decree is a bad deal. There are many other major issues in the new Consent Decree which will affect our fisheries for the next 24 years. This is just one significant example of what's to come. 🐟

(Continued on page 15)



# COMING ATTRACTIONS

## House Bill 5108 (2023)

### Michigan Legislature

Ellie,

Thank you for your reporting on **HB 5108** that you put out on December 1st. We need reporters to tell the story, the whole story. As President of the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources and a recreational fisherman and charter Captain from Fishtown all the facts to this complex issue should be presented to the public. I would be happy to talk with you. Until we have a chance to talk, I want to inform you of a few facts that were left out from your reporting from Fishtown.



The fishing licenses that Fishtown Preservation Society have the privilege to hold and use to pursue fish is an exception in the 2023 (1985 and 2000) consent decree that regulates fishing in the treaty ceded waters of the Washington Treaty of 1836. Starting on page 18 of the decree it states, state of Michigan commercial fishing in the treaty ceded waters is prohibited. It then goes on to explain the four exceptions. HB 5108 cannot change the consent decree. I urged Fishtown Preservation Society to participate in the negotiations of the 2023 consent decree, but they never requested from the parties to the case permission to participate.

**Secondly**, lake trout in Lake Michigan are still in a rehabilitation program under the auspices of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, meaning there is not an



#### HB 5108

abundance of lake trout to support commercial fishing. The biology of the abundance of fish in the Great Lakes is not used when reporting on this issue, reporters seem to just accept the claim by those who are not biologists that because there is a vast amount of water there must be an abundance of fish.

**Third**, the state needs to use the public trust resources in the best possible manner. What is the economic impact of shifting fish from a recreational resource to a commercial resource? How many jobs will be lost? What would be the negative impact to our coastal communities' economies when the recreational fishing markets start to wane?

**Lastly**, recreational fishing saved the Great Lakes. The change from a predominantly commercial fishery to a recreational fishery started back in the 1960's. At that time, for the purpose of our discussion, the Great Lakes Commercial Fisheries were collapsed due to sea lamprey predation, over commercial fishing and pollution. The change to a recreational fishery catapulted regulatory changes to clean up and rehabilitate the Great Lakes. Recreational fishing saved the Great Lakes, policy makers should recognize that recreational fishing is the best path for the future of our coastal communities. Tony Radjenovich - 231-866-0053. 🐟

**All Drug Program Expire  
12/31/2023  
Stay Compliant  
Renew Today!**



**United States Coast Guard**  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

## USCG LICENSE RENEWAL HELP:

Lt. Commander, USCG (retired) Charles "Chuck" Kakuska a Maritime Licensing Specialist, has been assisting our members for the past 20 years. We recommend him and appreciate his continued services to our association. Give him a call at: (734)847-1723 email: [SEAKsLic@aol.com](mailto:SEAKsLic@aol.com) for help with your USCG renewal. 🚤




God bless America and our troops



**Newsletter  
Deadline**

The next issue of the Cannonball Gazette will be published in March. Submissions must be in by March 1, 2024.

### UPDATES

 **VISIT MCBA Members Area**  
**[MCBAmembers.com](http://MCBAmembers.com)**

## Support The Companies

### That Support Your Association

These companies have donated many prizes towards the MCBA Scholarship Raffle held annual at the fall conference over the years.

- **Church Tackle Co.**
- **Dream Weaver Lures**
- **Dunham's Sports**
- **Frank's Great Outdoors**
- **Gallagher | Charter Lakes Insurance**
- **Jays Sporting Goods**
- **Northern King Lures**
- **Off Shore Tackle Company, LLC**
- **O'Keefe's Reef, Inc.**
- **Okuma Fishing Tackle**
- **Silver Horde, Inc.**
- **Warrior Lures**
- **Wolverine Tackle Company**

*Thank You!*

### CPMR Files Appeal in Sixth Circuit

December 20, 2023

The Coalition to Protect Michigan's Resources (CPMR) filed its principal appellate brief in the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit yesterday arguing against entry of the 2023 Great Lakes Consent Decree (2023 Decree). 🚤



*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.*