



cannonball

G A Z E T T E

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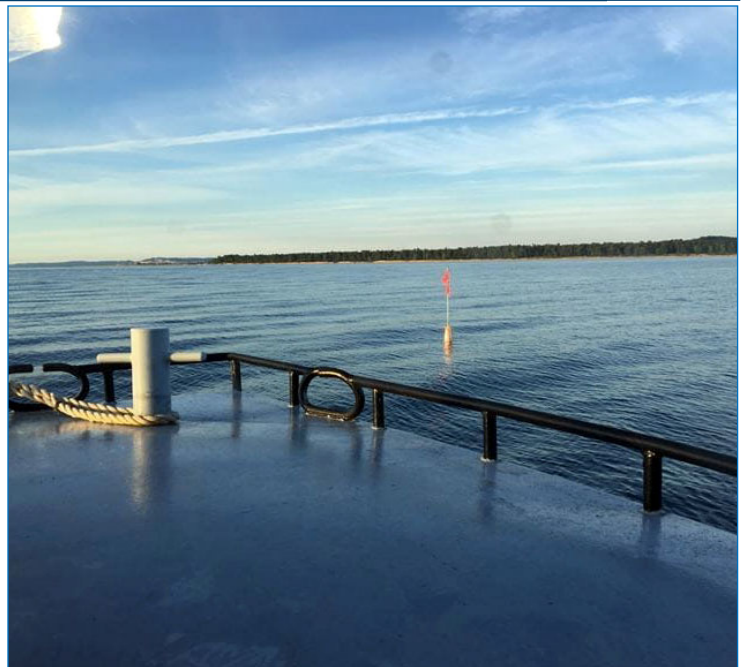
Great Lakes Fishing Decree Takes Effect

Fishing Decree takes effect March 1, 2024

Updated guidelines for co-management of fishery resources in parts of Michigan's Great Lakes are now in effect for the next 24 years. The new Great Lakes Fishing Decree was approved Aug. 24, 2023, by the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan. In the months since the decree's signing, the State of Michigan and tribal governments have been preparing to implement the provisions of the document.

This decree is necessary because five tribes – the Bay Mills Indian Community, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians –

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Commercial fishing nets are marked with staff buoys that extend 4 feet above the surface of the water and have an orange flag that is 16 inches by 16 inches in size. Anglers and boaters who encounter nets should give them a wide berth and not interfere with commercial fishing activity.

reserved fishing rights in the 1836 Treaty of Washington. Those rights were affirmed by federal courts more than four decades ago, resulting in the need for a co-management

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framework that allows for sharing of the fishery resource. This decree is the third since 1985, and each one has included a fishery management structure that dictates who can fish where, when, and how, and what can be brought home or sold.

The most recent iteration includes many updates, but the areas that can be fished by tribal commercial fishers and the reporting requirements for the fishing industry are notable provisions that have taken time to implement.

"Tribal fishing regulations needed to be updated to ensure they are consistent with the changes outlined in the new decree," said Dave Caroffino, DNR Fisheries Division Tribal Coordination Unit manager. "In addition, both the state and the tribes have been preparing electronic reporting systems to improve data collection from commercial fishers, wholesale fish dealers and charter captains."

The information collected from fisheries is vital to management and will be used by the state and the tribes to monitor fish populations and establish regulations in the future.


For more than two decades, the 2000 Consent Decree governed fishing in the 1836 Treaty waters of the Great Lakes, and recreational anglers and boaters grew



accustomed to the commercial fishing patterns that resulted from the regulations within that agreement. The Great Lakes ecosystem has changed substantially since 2000. As fishing regulations have been amended in response to those changes, patterns within the commercial fishery are likely to change, too.

"Anglers may see nets in locations they are not used to," said Nick Torsky, a supervisor within the DNR Great Lakes Enforcement Unit. "It is important to review the updated maps within the decree to understand where commercial fishing nets may be located. Being careful and vigilant for commercial fishing nets while on the water is critical to public safety."

Commercial fishing nets are marked with staff buoys that extend 4 feet above the surface of the water and have an orange flag that is 16 inches by 16 inches in size. Anglers and boaters who encounter nets should give them a wide berth and not interfere with commercial fishing activity.

To read the Great Lakes Fishing Decree and view the associated maps, visit the Great Lakes Co-management webpage. 



<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/fisheries/tribal/great-lakes>

"CANNONBALL GAZETTE"

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FROM THE HELM . . .



It's been a very warm winter. I cannot remember a winter in my lifetime that I have not been able to get out on the ice and catch a few blue gills.

It will be interesting to see how the warmer lakes will affect our fishery and the ecosystem.

The MCBA Board has been very busy and is moving forward with some new members. We are welcoming new Board Members: Capt. Mark Williams, CLM, Capt. Bruce Shane, NLM, and Capt. Bill Dunk, SLH. These new board members are bringing new and different visions. They are collaborating with the current officers and board members to bring the MCBA into the internet age with the goals of protecting the Great Lakes fishery, advocating for the profession, and promoting MCBA members' businesses.

I want to give thanks to retiring board members Rich Haslett and George Freeman. Rich retires from the office of Vice-President, after serving as President and Vice-President for several different terms since 2003. Rich and his wife, Linda, have also been our sports show operators for many years, and they have agreed to help their successors in the future. George Freeman is retiring after serving as the Central Lake Michigan director since 2009. Past-President Rich, and retired director George have both agreed to remain active as advisors to the new board of directors. Many thanks to both for all their many years of service to the Association.

As always, a top priority of the Association is the protection of the fishery. In this regard the appeal of the Tribal Decree by the Coalition to

Protect Michigan Resources is on-going. How this is resolved may seriously affect the future of our fishery.

Michigan United Conservation Club (MUCC) has been working on a bill that was introduced this week. HB 5553 is the good bill the MCBA supports to protect the sports fishing industry and bring the commercial fishing industry up to date with licensing fees and regulations.

The state licensed commercial fishing industry has reintroduced HB 5108 proposing a 25% allotment of sport fish (walleye, perch, and lake trout) for their industry.

This bill's major target is the Saginaw Bay walleye, since the Tribal Decree dictates what happens in all Tribal ceded waters. The MCBA is continuously working with new fishery's Chief Randy Claramunt. We have participated in meetings on charter boats and commercial fishing reporting. We have had meetings on the implementation of the new Tribal Decree.

We also met with Michigan Sea Grant Director, Silvia Newell, Associate Director Heather Triezenberg, and senior extension educator Brandon Schroeder regarding the Sea Grant's interest in establishing commercial fishing.

The MCBA, MUCC, Michigan Steelheaders, Hammond Bay Sport fishing club and Northwest Michigan Fishing Club, stated our opinions on Aquaculture in the Great Lakes, the charter fishing and the sports fishing industry, the Tribal Decree and state licensed commercial fishing industry.

We educated the Sea Grant personnel about the commercial threat to our current two billion dollar per year sport fishing industry. Michigan Sea Grant has

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been helping promote the State Licensed Commercial fishing industry for the past couple of years. We hope they will now understand how that would harm our industry. We are hoping for a change in their future actions.

In addition to these meetings and legal actions, we are in the process of moving all MCBA Board meetings to zoom and allowing our members to attend these meetings via Zoom. There will be more to come as we develop this. We are setting aside funds to represent our membership and their businesses to the best of our ability.

We are also working on a promotion of the Michigan Charter Boat Association on Michigan out Of Doors. We aim to have this on the air by summer.

We are making updates to the MCBA Members Area on the MCBA website. Maxine Appleby, our social media, and Web Developer created excellent promotions on our social media last summer.

We are trying hard to keep non-members from posting pictures and promoting their business on our social

media. These people are free loading on our site, and on occasion have posted some nasty (and untrue) comments about our organization.

Non-members should not be posting on our site. Those who do are freeloading on our efforts to provide accurate information for the clients of our Association members. If you wish to post on our social media, please become a member first.

The fall conference has been set for October 19th at the Great Wolf Lodge in Traverse City Michigan. Please save the date on your calendar.

These are some of the happenings developing in the MCBA.

I know everybody is preparing their boats and tackle for a possible early spring.

Please be safe out there. 🐟

Captain Bill Winowiecki
President,
Michigan Charter Boat Association

VISIT MCBA Members Area
<https://mcbamembers.com/>



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

Hello fellow
Captains!



I just finished working the MCBA booth at the Ultimate Fishing and Outdoorama shows that is run by Capt. Rich Haslett and his wife, Linda. Not sure if all of you are aware of the virtual fishing contest that the MCBA sponsors for our scholarship program. For a small fee, children as well as adults can try to get the lowest score during the show. Both adult and child



MCBA BOOTH AT THE ULTIMATE FISHING AND OUTDOORAMA SHOWS

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Captain John Giszczak



Motor Fuel Gas Tax refund for Charter Boats.

After talking to a number of captains, I realized there are still a number who are not claiming the "road" fuel tax for their charter operations. It's a fairly easy procedure albeit a little time consuming on your part but well worth it.

To qualify "charter boats must have certificate of inspection from the DNR" showing you are a commercial vessel. The entire process must be done online. The way to sign up for the rebate is to call the Motor Fuel Tax Division in Lansing 517-636-4600. Once you are registered, the whole process is online only. You will be required to scan your receipts (must be scans of the original invoices) and submit

them on the state website - You must file a refund claim within 6 months of the date of purchase. If you trailer your boat and purchase fuel from a gas station I don't know if you qualify but the folks in Lansing will tell you how, if it's possible. My fuel is purchased at a marina with a detailed receipt, name of business, address, phone, exact amount of gallons purchased, marked "paid in full", signed and dated by the marina. Most marina fuel docks provide similar fuel invoices. For fuel purchased January 1, 2024 and after - Gasoline rebate is \$.30 per gallon. The people that staff this division are very helpful and actually answer the phone. They will guide you through the registration and submission steps.

Motor Fuel Tax Division 517-636-4600

Don't forget to check your listing on the MCBA website . 

(Continued from page 4) **Directors' Report**

winners get a free fishing charter that is donated by our charter captains. It was fun to watch the adults compete with each other and watching the children getting excited about bringing that fish in. There were a lot of children who had not fished before, and it is such an effective way to get them interested in fishing. Then you have the children who love to fish, and they could not get enough. Such fun times watching everyone.

We had many people that came to our booth asking about the MCBA and our captains. We explained what the MCBA is about and how to get on the website to find the area and captain's information. A lot of MCBA's pamphlets were taken so hopefully some of the captains will be getting calls.

Unfortunately, after more than 20 years of running the MCBA virtual fishing booth Capt. Rich and Linda are



This little girl had so much fun catching her fish at the Outdoorama.


stepping down. Hopefully, the booth will not go wayside.

It is about time to get the boats

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

back in the water. With the weather we have had, it does not look like we will have any problem with ice. The water levels on my end are down and hopefully they will stay like this. The boaters will have to beware and not take any shortcuts.

Everyone have a great season. 

Southern Lake Huron

By Captain Bill Dunk
MCBA Director




Hello Fellow Captains

I'm excited about this new venture for me with MCBA, and I know I have some big shoes to fill replacing Karl as the SLH director. I will do my best to keep you informed about what we have going on. I'd like to share a bit about myself.... I started fishing the Thumb area for salmon and walleye in the mid 90's. During the winter and spring, I was chasing steelhead on a fly rod all over the Great Lakes. I currently live in the Thumb and still fish it quite often, but also keep a boat in Ludington. I'm a bit different from many captains as I do not charter fish but do vessel transportation throughout the Lakes. I'm also an AMS Marine Surveyor with SAMS and a marine electronics installer. I stay quite busy in the summer.

With the lack of winter Michigan has had, many people have already launched small boats in Saginaw Bay or lower ports of SLH. Some of the larger boats in storage will be trying to get in early to chase those early silver salmon. This is a great time for us to go over our vessels and make sure everything is working properly and all required safety equipment is on board and serviceable. Verify you have the proper number\type\size of life jackets on board and they are accessible. Check that your portable fire extinguishers are up to date. If they are disposable, there will be a production date either

on the bottom or on the side label. USCG states they must be removed from service within 12 years after the date of manufacturing. If they are serviceable, they must be inspected every year and have an inspection tag on them. This also goes for fixed systems as well. Your navigation lights must be in working order. Sometimes on older boats the lenses have gotten cloudy which will drastically reduce the distance others can see you. Many of us have swapped over to LED type bulbs, but they must be Marine style that are to be used for Navigation lights. The cheap ones from Amazon may not produce the brightness required by the USCG.

I hope all of you have a great fishing; boating season, and If there is anything I can do to help, do not hesitate to reach out to me.  Fishon1066@hotmail.com

Upper Peninsula

By Captain Jim LaBeske
MCBA Director



Greetings from the Keweenaw and the Birthplace of Professional Hockey.

This is the Spring report of the "Winter that Wasn't"!!!

There are three items to report on... two new – The New DNR Director and Great Lakes Salmon Initiative's proposal for three additional rods and one ongoing – The Buffalo Reef update.

Go to the links to read the entire articles and/or I have included brief summaries of each.

<https://mucc.org/gov-whitmer-announces-new-dnr-director/>

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIEOG/bulletins/36e9463>

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(Continued from page 6) . . . **Directors Report**

- * Resume In a Nutshell... Commissioner of the Michigan Lottery from Jan. 2008 to Feb 2017. Director of Office of the State Employer. Two terms Grand Rapids City Commission.
- * Judge of the 62-A District Court Wyoming, Michigan. Bachelor of Art in history, Juris Doctor from the University of Detroit.
- * **New DNR Director's Experience** in Fisheries, Wildlife, Forestry = **ZERO Found.**

<https://glsalmon.org/2024/01/13/our-proposal-for-a-great-lakes-trolling-license/>

(\$26, up to three additional rods per BOAT trolling for Trout, Salmon & Walleye on Great Lakes & Connecting Waters)

Summary of the Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee's Opinions on GLSI Proposal.

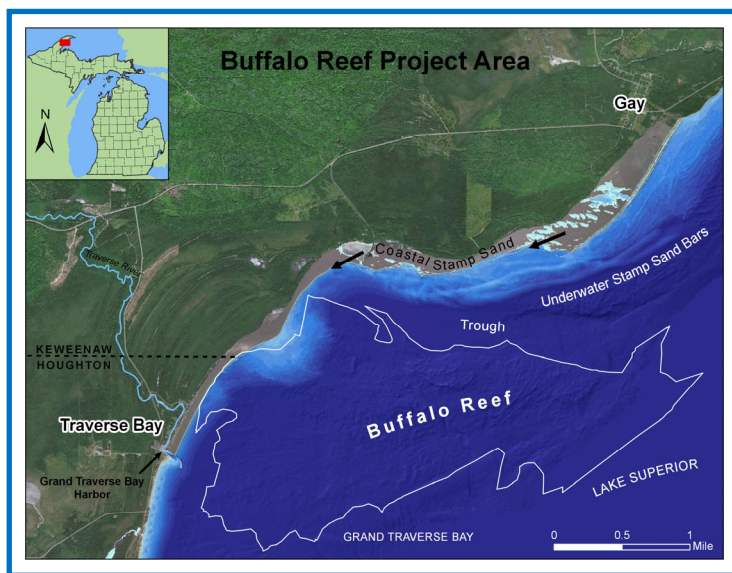
Five of sixteen voting members of the LSCFAC responded regarding Great Lakes Salmon Initiative's proposal to add a license that would allow additional lines to be used when trolling on the Great Lakes.

Comments were requested on January 8, 2024, and summarized on January 31, 2024. Based on responses, 1 group was in favor, 3 were not in favor, and 1 remained neutral. Details are below:

- * Copper Country Walleye Association was in favor of the proposal.
- * Central UP Sportfishing Association was not in favor of the proposal.
- * MUCC via George Lindquist was not in favor of the proposal. Concerns regarding increased efficiency, potentially opening the door to shore-based anglers dominating key river mouth or pier locations, and 2023 Decree implications.
- * Fred Waara Chapter of Trout

Unlimited was not in favor of this proposal. Concern is that it would not generate much funding and would benefit charter captains and fishing boat owners.

- * South Shore Fishing Association stayed neutral on the proposal. Some concerns on catch and release mortality and where funds would be directed if cormorant control were funded via other sources.
- * Some employees of Law Enforcement Division, although not voting members of the LSCFAC, were in favor of the proposal and did not see issues from an enforcement perspective.



Buffalo Reef Task Force releases draft alternatives analysis.

Report details analysis of three stamp sands disposal locations; public comments accepted through March 1.

A. The multi-agency Buffalo Reef Task Force has issued its draft alternatives analysis for disposal of stamp sands removed from threatening valuable fish spawning and rearing habitat in and around the natural 2,200-acre reef, situated off the eastern coast of the Keweenaw Peninsula.

B. The cost estimate for the project is \$2.1

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billion.

- C. The task force decided on pursuing construction of an upland landfill for disposal of sands removed from the Lake Superior shoreline as its preferred alternative of 3 course of action finalists. Go to the link below to read the entire article.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDNR/bulletins/387cb25>

Tight Lines & Circle Hooks 

Northern Lake Michigan

By Captain Bruce Shane
MCBA Director



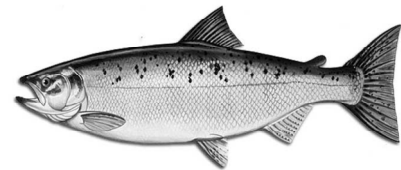
Where is winter?



The weather here in Northern Michigan has been a roller coaster, as I write this in late February the forecast high temp. for tomorrow is the mid - sixties followed by a high in the twenties the following day, then more sixties by the weekend. Ice fishing and snowmobiling has been a bust. But some decent river steelhead fishing has been reported. The forecast up to mid-March suggests near record high temperatures with a long-term trend into June being above average as well. Do we get the boat out of storage early? I fish in the Ohio waters of Lake Erie starting early April before moving my boat to Frankfort in July. This season if the weather trend continues April may be like summer or does mother nature have some more surprises?

Based on a recent podcast on the Fish Hawk Electronics website featuring Jay

Wesley (Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator for the DNR) we have reason to be optimistic for salmon fishing success in 2024. Jay suggested that there are an estimated eight million wild Kings swimming around and that with recent increases in stocking and a good hatch of Alewives in 2023 should yield some good catches of healthy fish.



Both Coho and King sizes were down slightly in 2023 and that trend should continue according to Jay. Lake Trout catches which are vital to our success on a lot of trips have been down recently and it may be due to some lower stocking lake wide or possibly due to increases in bloater chub forage keeping the lake trout deeper and offshore.

Getting back to the weather according to NOAA ice coverage on the great lakes as of Feb. 11 was 2.68% the lowest in history at that date. Lack of lake ice coverage and the mussel invasion has not been good at all for Whitefish spawning. According to an article on MLive an experiment conducted by the state's tribes and the Nature Conservancy 100,000 Whitefish eggs were placed in the Jordan river in an effort to see if fish once mature, will return to spawn in the future. Optimism for this experiment is based on the success of Whitefish spawning in the tributaries of Green Bay. If the Jordan river experiment is successful (which they will not know for at least five years) they plan to extend this stocking to other suitable rivers.


The Michigan DNR is looking at options to dredge the Platte River mouth. Sleeping Bear National Park Service has not allowed dredging of the Platte mouth since 2017 and there has been a lot of controversy surrounding this issue. Fishermen of course

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<https://mcbamembers.com/>

like to utilize the launch site nearby to chase Coho and Lake trout. According to MLive the DNR plan which will require park service, EGLE, and US Army Core of Engineers approval, would be to install a hydraulic dredge that would vacuum pump sand from the mouth and deposit it offshore in Platte Bay. This solution would not violate the Park's insistence that dredging spoils would not be deposited on park land and the river mouth's natural flow direction would not be altered.

Finally, this report is to cover updates from Manistee to the bridge so anyone that would like to volunteer as a port captain or otherwise provide news for the Cannonball please contact me at:

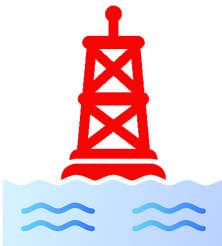
rigandrollcharters@gmail.com

419-356-4317. Tight lines to all in 2024. 

Central Lake Michigan

By Captain Mark Williams

MCBA Director



Spring, the wonderful time of the year when everything is new, and the season changes to better weather and outdoor activities are becoming evident. A big change for Central Lake Michigan is the change of Directors. For 15 years, Captain George Freeman served as Central Lake Michigan Director for MCBA. As Capt. George mentioned in his last article, he has passed the torch to me, Captain Mark Williams, of Silver Addiction Charters. I am a second-generation charter Captain and have fished for over 40 years on the great lakes. My Father Capt. Dick Williams, ran our 26 ft Sea ray across the state, following the fish. I was the original "auto pilot" back in 1977, for him, and have had a passion for our Great Fishery ever since. I can honestly say that the evolution of the fishery and how we pursue our fish has come leaps and bounds.

As I was making notes on what to write for my first article, I began doing some research, and came across a few interesting things. This February, the Loomis St boat ramps were in for the first time in over 40 years, as temperatures have allowed for the start of the trolling season early for some of the smaller boats. The reports have been typical of a spring fishery, with browns, lake trout and coho's around the harbor being caught.

This spring, Ludington will be receiving 80,000 Brown Trout, 40,000 Coho and 100,000 Chinook Salmon that are net penned by the Ludington Charter Boat Association out at the State Park. We will also receive 35,000 Lake Trout from USFW. These numbers are what keep our Central Lake Michigan Ports at the top of the list for catching these amazing fish.

The final and most interesting piece of information that I came across was regarding my predecessor, Capt. George Freeman. Capt. George is a Legend in Ludington and someone that is always on the fish. On the few occasions that I have been able to fish with him, or have a discussion regarding our fishery, I have always come away with something new. I found out that Capt. George was at the first ever meeting of the Ludington Charter Boat Association, and a member for over 33 years. Capt. George has been an MCBA member for over 34 years and was Central Lake Michigan Director for the last 15 years. In talking with several people within the charter community, MIDNR, and MCBA, it was made clear that NOBODY has been in a leadership role for our Great Lakes Fishery longer than Capt. George. This is why when he asked me if I was going to step up and be the new Central Lake Michigan Director, I felt honored to have his support. Although he has left big shoes to fill, I will do my best to fill them. Capt.

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George is not going away; he will still be running trips out of Ludington. With that being said I would like to personally and publicly say, THANK YOU, for your many years of service, it is greatly appreciated. May your season be filled with good weather, calm seas, and full coolers Capt. George! 🐟



MCBA Vice President Report

By Captain Karl Burnside

Michigan house bill H.R. 5108, introduced last fall into the State legislature, will allow a 25% annual take of sport fish by commercial fish netting. While it's fortunate this bill has not yet been passed into law, it is still being diligently worked on by those that proposed it, and those that will benefit from it. When reading into this legislative proposal, it quickly becomes clear that it does not in any way, make the millions of sport angler enthusiast in Michigan the winner if implemented.

Those that will benefit are a select few commercial net fishing businesses and potentially the elected officials who bought into such a disastrous proposal to further their own agenda. I view it as a wholesale slap in the face and fleecing of allocated state funds, from the millions of sport fishing enthusiasts and out-of-state guests, who purchase fishing licenses when visiting Michigan to enjoy our Great Lakes fishery.

Let's take Saginaw Bay for example: The DNR has estimated the Walleye population in the past to be somewhere between six and seven million fish. If we average that number to 6.5 million, that is an annual take of over 1.6 million Walleye from Saginaw Bay alone if H.R. 5108 is passed. But let's look at it from a different perspective, that being pounds of fish.

The commercial net fishers are not

targeting smaller Walleye. They are targeting restaurant quality size fish, so it can be assumed they would be ideally targeting 18" to 24" fish. If we take the average weight of those fish in that range (I used numbers here from my personal catch records of size to weight) that is a 3.77-pound fish. If that number is multiplied by 1.6 million, we get an annual take just over six million pounds of Walleye from Saginaw Bay. I don't think simple math has ever been done by any of the supporters of H.R. 5108. Maybe it has, and they don't care? It's clear their motives lie elsewhere.

The DNR likes to look at something they call angler effort. Nets have low angler effort with a high success rate, all but guaranteeing a successful catch when used. Angler effort is a completely different subject when it comes to hook-and-line sport fishing. There is no doubt in my mind sport fishing angler effort will suffer the very first year H.R. 5108 passes. It will continue to trend downwards in ensuing years, along with interest in sport fishing by the public.

In summary, Michigan house bill H.R. 5108 serves very few, but those it will serve, will be rewarded generously. There is a glimmer of hope. There is proposed legislation in the making as an alternate to H.R. 5108. This proposed alternate legislation makes sound, logical and sustainable use of our Great Lakes resources based on fact and common sense.

The MCBA will send e-blasts when that legislation is ready to be introduced. We need all MCBA members, and anyone you can contact through family/friends/associates, to let our elected officials know you support this alternate legislation over the disaster that is H.R. 5108. 🐟



A Retiree's View over the Transom

By Captain Jim Fenner
MCBA Secretary, 2008 - 2012

It is no secret that for the past three or four years the Association has faced difficulties previously considered beyond imagination.

If you read the newsletter or watch the news you know of some of the issues the Association has had to deal with, primarily: the new Consent Decree (CD). While it has been proclaimed adopted by the Federal Judge, it has not been implemented, and there are serious issues yet to be resolved. As a stand-alone organization, and as a founding member of The Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources:

<https://protectmiresources.com>

We remain deeply involved.

It has been hard: The state DNR negotiators refused from the beginning to allow the sport fishing representatives to be a part of the negotiations. The new decree was prepared primarily by a limited number of the MDNR staff. The coalition is represented by the best possible legal team but, while they have represented us at the lowest possible cost, it has been extremely expensive due to the long hours and high filing fees. It has always been hard to raise the required funds and as the issue has stretched out, it has gotten harder and harder. I hate to think we might wind up with a terrible CD, because we were unable to fund the legal expenses needed to do the job for us. More funds are needed still at this time.

Respected retired MDNR biologists who did not have to worry about losing their jobs objected to the CD's gill net provisions strongly, but they had no say. They were disrespected and disregarded.

The coalition has appealed. There will

be court hearings in May. There is still time to fix the decree.

The coalition of sport fishing organizations have published their strong objections to the CD's provisions on their website. I urge all members to go to the site. Read the proposed decree, study the issues and the coalitions objections and responses. Then make your feelings known in letters, emails, and phone calls to those who have the ability to correct the flaws.

As if that were not enough, we are facing a strong push from Michigan commercial fishers, who are proposing legislation to allow them to commercially net a massive portion of our currently protected sport fish, including walleye, perch, and more. These commercial interests have been receiving help from the Michigan Sea Grant. A powerful force in Michigan, and one who in the past had been a friend of the Association. We have been working hard to educate MI Sea Grant about the greater value of sport caught fish.

In addition to these huge external issues, the Association itself has been working to become better and stronger. In the internet age, the latest ideas and methods are being considered.

The only constant over time is change. As time goes on change must and will happen. Change is hard, but it is coming to us, too.

Captains are busy people. Time is a precious commodity, and we choose how to use our time with great care and purpose. As time has passed, we are finding that it's difficult to get the membership together for as much time as we did for our annual conferences in the past. The board is working to find new ways to get the largest possible attendance at our annual conferences and annual membership meetings. New formats and new times on

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(Continued from page 11) . . . **A Retiree's View**

the calendar are being considered. The addition of Zoom-casting of these meetings is also being considered.

As for me, I always enjoyed attending these meetings in person. Meeting and greeting my friends from all over the state. And usually, making some new friends to boot, as a bonus. Even though I have been retired for some years, I always pencil in the annual meeting and conference and, as long as I can, will likely continue to do so. Old friends are the best, and charter boat captain friends are the best you can find. Try to find or make the time on your calendar to attend. You might be surprised how much you can learn at the meeting. It will give you a first-hand chance to make your opinions known to the association, and the top leaders of the MDNR, who are always present.

The advent of the internet, with individual and association websites and more recently the growing impact of social media platforms, has greatly complicated the job of promoting Association members. Fortunately, we have board members who are well-versed in these issues, and new efforts are underway to modernize our internet presence. Some of these efforts may be in effect for this season.

I am retired now, but I still care, and I keep informed by being a retired member of the association. If you are thinking of retiring, consider becoming a retired member. It is easy to do and not expensive. It keeps me informed about the current issues and helps me stay in touch with my friends and former colleagues in the MCBA. The retired member category is the way I do it. Keep this in mind for your own future. When it warms up a little, look for me around the docks.

Hope to see you there. 🐟

MDNR Charter Reporting Update

By Kendra
Kozlauskos

Hello Captains!

Happy early spring to many of you, who I know have started fishing much earlier than in years past.



There have been some recent changes to charter reporting that I wanted to highlight again. We also have some new requirements for Inland Guides which will affect some of you, in both licensing and reporting.

First, as most of you are already aware, charter reporting has moved to twice-monthly as of January 1, 2024.

Your reports are now due by the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month by 11pm. The trips included in your report will span the previous due date (Wednesday) to the Tuesday before the current due date. For instance, the report due on Wednesday, March 27 will include trips taken from Wednesday, March 13 to Tuesday, March 26. Please keep current on reporting and remember you must report all intervals, even if you are not fishing those intervals.

Second, there are new requirements (per Public Act 220 of 2023) that start March 1, 2024, that require anyone fishing inland waters to acquire an Inland Guide License and report their guided trips monthly. This will directly affect some of you. If you fish ANYWHERE besides the Great Lakes or Great Lake Connecting Waters (defined as Detroit River, St Clair River, Lake St Clair, and St Mary's River) you will need to obtain the new Inland Guide license. If you have a valid USCG license, your Inland Guide license fee will be waived. If you ONLY fish in the Great Lakes or GL Connecting

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Waters, you will NOT need the Inland Guide license. There has been confusion over what "Great Lake Connecting Waters" means. There are only four Great Lakes Connecting Waters (listed above). Reporting for inland trips taken under this Guide license will occur in the same FACTS reporting account that you currently have. Inland reports will be due monthly, on the first of every month. You can find updated information on how to apply and obtain a license on the MDNR Inland Guide website:



<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/fisheries/business/guides>

As a result of preparing the FACTS system to accept Inland Guide trips, you will notice some changes to the "Enter New Trip" and the Reports ("Submit Reports" and "Future Reporting Status") sections. These changes are yet to be finalized. I will send out an email to explain changes when they are set. Trip entry changes will involve the ability to select different fishing modes. Inland reporting requires shore, ice, and pier trips to be entered. Great Lakes will still only require boat trips to be entered. Changes to the reporting aspect involve the ability to report at different frequencies (twice monthly for Great Lakes, and monthly for Inland).

Location preferences were reset in January 2024 because of changes to the requirement of a departure port. For those not aware, if you tend to fish the same location(s) again and again, you can set up favorites in "Preferences" which can be found in "My Account." You can also call me, and I can set those up for you. It should make entering trips quicker and you can still use the map if you fish somewhere different.

Ownership of FACTS Accounts

All captains that are running Great Lakes charter trips will now be required to have their own FACTS reporting account.

The reporting requirements for charter captains fall within part 445 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. Section 44501 defines the difference between an owner (person who claims lawful possession of a vessel) and an operator (one who controls the motion, direction, or speed of the vessel). Section 44508 outlines the catch activity reporting requirements, and those apply to a "charter boat operator." Because the owner of a business or vessel is not necessarily the operator, the responsibility for reporting each trip falls to the one who was under control of the vessel during the trip."

If you have a current FACTS reporting account and anyone other than yourself is captaining your boat(s), I will need to create separate reporting accounts for each captain. Ultimately, the person running the trip is responsible for reporting that trip.

If you are a captain that runs trips on multiple boats, you will need to add each of those boats to your account. Remember that Great Lakes charter trips are boat specific.

We can no longer allow one account with a business or owner's name with multiple captains running trips on boats listed in that account.

All trips must be reported by the captain who ran the trip, in their own FACTS account, under the boat the trip took place on.

If you have a FACTS reporting account and someone besides yourself is running trips on the boat(s) in that account, please contact me. I will need to have each captain create their own reporting account

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to report the trips they ran.

As always, I appreciate your patience and cooperation with recent and upcoming changes. I hope everyone has a fantastic season and feel free to contact me anytime.

For assistance with reporting, or questions about upcoming changes please contact Kendra Kozlauskos at 231-330-2845 or DNR-Fish-Charter@michigan.gov.

Questions on fishery trends and future analyses of charter or inland guide data, please contact Chris Kemp at:

248-860-3804 - Kempc5@michigan.gov. 🐟

Charter Boat Operators

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/fisheries/business/charter>



Did You Know:

MCBA's Facebook page is used to promote our charter businesses! It is customer centric and has always been that way. Most member captains do not even subscribe to MCBA's Facebook page. 🐟

VISIT MCBA Members Area
<https://mcbamembers.com/>



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



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

The Merchant Mariner Certificate

Suitable for Framing is presently available at:

<https://homeport.uscg.mil/missions/merchant-mariners/merchant-mariner-certificate/>



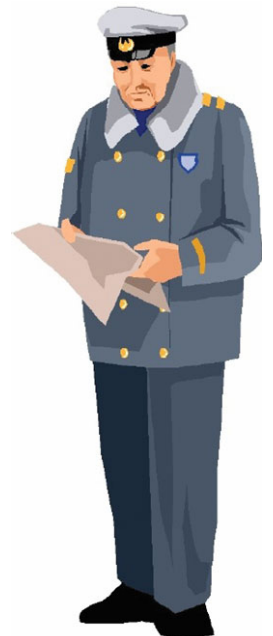
Mariners who hold or have held a valid Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) can download, save, print and proudly display the new certificate.

Users are reminded that the certificate, which is to be used for display purposes only, is not authorized as a substitute for a valid MMC and will not substitute for the MMC where the requirement to post a credential exists. There is no fee for downloading the certificate. 🐟

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 or email SEAKsLic@aol.com for help with your USCG/MMC renewal. 🐟



God bless America and our troops

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.