

DRAFT
LAKE MICHIGAN COMMERCIAL FISHING BOARD
MEETING
November 6, 2023
Video Meeting

1. Organizational Matters:

Call to Order:

Chairman Charlie Henriksen called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Members Present: Charlie Henriksen, Mark Maricque, Mike LeClair, Todd Stuth, Brett Schwarz, Dan Pawlitzke.

Member Absent: Rick Johnson

DNR Staff Present: Brad Eggold, Nick Leger, Miranda Westphal, Ryan Propson, Jean Rombach-Bartels, Jordan Resop, Robert Stroess.

Others present: Dan Dombkowski, UWSP, Titus Seilheimer, Al Blizel, Bob Wincek, Brandon, Jerry Fetterer, Paul Smith, Will Henriksen, Dennis Hickey, Jay Virlee, Jack Tong, Sharon Fegley-Moen and **Meeting Guest**.

2. A. Minutes: Brett Schwarz made a motion to approve the August 28, 2023 LMCFB meeting minutes, seconded by Todd Stuth all present voted to approve minutes.
3. Discussion Items:
 - A. Miranda Westphal has replaced the recently retired Al Blizel.
 - B. Cares Act Brad explained that these Federal funds were targeted and used within 100 miles of Lake Michigan and the Bay of Green Bay. Electronic billboards were used in high traffic areas, TV, streaming occurred on ESPN, ABC, NBC, Discovery, CNN, Hulu.
 - C. Dan Dombrowski, UWSP, provided the LMCFB with an update on Latent Mortality Study from August 2022 where 30 acoustic transmitters were downloaded at end of September 2022 with 25 responding, but 3 flatlined with the initial mortality of 12%. Then 92 receivers were in place as of July 2023. They are looking for 5 fish not transmitting (unknown). Best case is 10% Mortality and worst case is 27% (8 of 30). UWSP will tag 75 whitefish during the winter of 2023. Also tag 200 fish during 2024 & 2025 in Big Bay de Noc during spawning season and fall for telemetry.
 - D. Lake Trout; Brad Eggold, DNR showed an 8-minute video of the history of Lake Trout with Justine Hasz, DNR making the presentation. The video explained there was no commercial fishing of Lake Trout for over 60 years. During the 1960's the DNR instituted Lamprey control and stocking of Lake Trout & Salmon to consume Alewife. DNR also adjusted sports fishing limits and season dates. In 2016 the LMCFB requested the DNR to open the Lake Trout for incidental catch with a formal request in 2022. In January 2023, the DNR created the Lake Michigan Stakeholders Group seeking facts and input on the Lake Trout issue. Please refer to the DNR web site which there is information on this topic. Since the 1980's the

estimated annual Lake Trout sports harvest was 29,000 with an allowable catch of 82,000 Lake Trout, thus creating an excess Lake Trout of about 50,000 Lake Trout. The DNR has also decreased the Lake Trout mortality to 30% from 40% . The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) was increased from 29,000 to 48,443 Lake Trout. There appeared to be more sports fishers participating in the last Lake Trout meeting versus the very limited commercial fishers. Management of Alewife is critical for the increase or decrease in predator fish populations, however Alewife has an impact on natural production of Lake Trout.

- E. Lake Trout Discussion and possible motion: Stuth made a motion to: Augment data collection along Door County for a study plan along with DNR cooperation, seconded by LeClair with all members voting aye. This motion was later retracted by Stuth and LeClair then Stuth modified the motion to read: Conduct a study on Lake Trout to collect the necessary data to make a more informed decision as we move through this process. Seconded by LeClair. All Aye.
- F. Economic Study; UW – Whitewater Professor Winden sent out the final survey to commercial fishers, fish dealers, etc. We understand that one professor left the University.
- G. Taylor Hrabak has completed her project, graduated from UWGB and is gainfully employed.
- H. The Wisconsin DNR manages Lake Trout in Lake Michigan on behalf of the States bordering Lake Michigan with Federal funding (**no amounts provided**), Fishing Stamps (**no amount provided**) and rarely used General-Purpose revenue. Contact Susan Wells at USFWS for Federal Government costs of Lake Trout restoration & Lamprey control.

4. Old Business:

- Update on historical perspective; DNR Attorney, Chandra Harvey is compiling the history of commercial fishing and the rationale of those regulations pertaining to the limited entry system developed in the 1970's.
- 2024 Priority list:
 1. Establish a Commercial Lake Trout Harvest
 2. Improve EFHRS to make it efficient, effective and user friendly
 3. Complete the trawl rule in a timely manner
 4. Resolve the trap net night rule so it works for business.

5. Board Member Matters:

- Lake Michigan and Bay of Green Bay water levels are down significantly, thus requiring dredging of Sumacio harbor.

Thus, the next LMCFB meeting will be in January, 2024 at 5:30 PM.

6. Adjournment: Motion - Moved by Mark Maricque, seconded by Mike LeClair.
Motion passed unanimously at 7:38 P.M.