



# MICHIGAN STEELHEADERS THUMB CHAPTER

ISSUED QUARTERLY THROUGHOUT THE WATERSPORT COMMUNITIES OF MICHIGAN'S "THUMB"

## President's Message

September, 2010

### Greetings From the Wheelhouse

When I was a student in grade school the buzz was that, due to the fact we in southern Ohio had just had a number of years of extremely cold winters, we should prepare our selves for another Ice Age and that soon there would not be enough land available for the human race due to the population explosion. Fortunately Al Gore took care of the coming Ice age by promoting Global warming and became a billionaire in the process.

Over the last 65 years I have been very fortunate to have visited 48 of the 50 states (or did Obama say there were 57 states?). Throughout this great country, from the western shores of the great North West to the north eastern point of Maine there does not appear to be a shortage of beautiful land, especially throughout northern Michigan.

In early September, I had the opportunity to tour a lot of the northern part of the Lower Peninsula and a large portion of the Upper Peninsula. Early on it became obvious that

I-75 north was nothing more than a narrow ribbon of concrete splitting a vast wilderness with virtually no sign of human existence. Once we crossed the big bridge, the UP appeared to be a completely different world with huge forests, water everywhere and a sprinkling of hardy residents. This time of year the UP would have to rank very highly among the most beautiful areas in the country. Without question a power far greater than ours touched the UP and blessed it with all of its beauty, especially the Keweenaw Peninsula. (Don't ever go to the UP without taking a fishing pole like someone I know!).

Here we go again! It seems like just yesterday we were sitting next to the fire and chomping at the bit waiting for the snow to disappear so we could get the fishing gear ready and the boat in the water. It's time to start that cycle all over again. Make sure you put the gear away in ready to use condition, winterize the boat properly, have enough wood and your favorite beverages on hand, so you can sit next to the fire and wish that the snow would magically disappear.

The Steelheader's summer of 2010 was for the most part a very successful and enjoyable one. My friend Mother Nature, unlike previous years, smiled on our summer and gave us one that allowed us to have almost perfect weather for most all of our events. The annual fish fry, pig roast, Harbor Beach kids fishing day and the special ladies night were all a great success. Those people that donated their time and sometimes their own money should give themselves a pat on the back because without them these events could not be successful. One thing for sure there was plenty to eat, especially the ice cream. However, Mother Nature has to make sure that we the little people never lose sight of the fact that she is in control. She could have been a little more cooperative during the period we were feeding the steelhead fingerlings. Some of us spent a number of days rolling around on the net pen docks (like overweight walrus' out of water) during gale force winds and driving rain trying to keep the docks and net pens together. She can be nasty if she wants too!

In spite of the loss of the king salmon, the Lake Huron thumb area fishery appears to be improving a little each year. This year there were an ample number of lake trout, steelhead, walleye, pinks, whitefish and an occasional brown trout taken on a regular basis. In most cases, those fish caught didn't just jump into the boat, but made us all work a little harder than in previous years. Some times the skunk never did get out of the box. I still believe that "a bad day fishing is better than a good day at work".

As most of you know, the planting program in Lake Huron has changed some what in the past few years. The DNR has been convinced that continuing to plant Chinook salmon fingerlings in Lake Huron has been a waste of time. These fish were nothing more than food for other species and there were very few, if any, returning to Harbor Beach. The brown trout planted last fall were somewhat of an experiment that appears to have been very successful. These fingerlings were almost of legal size when planted. They were approximately 11 inches long which according to the experts would allow about a 60% survival rate. This year, there were a number of these fish caught in the Harbor Beach area that were 18 to 20 inches long and weighed as much as 3 pounds. After many years of arguing with the powers that be, we have finally convinced them that we can put steelhead fingerlings in our net pens and raise them successfully. We received approximately 18,000 that were from 3 to 5 inches long and fed them until they were 7 to 8 inches long. Since raising steelhead in net pens is a first time experiment for both we and the DNR, a great deal was learned as to what to expect the next time around. We have been assured that we will receive more steelhead next year. They will be tagged and will come from the hatchery under more controlled conditions.

For those of you that are continuing to fish and brave the weather, make sure you keep your feet dry. As a famous man once said; "never offer to teach a fish to swim"

Your Prez;  
Jack R Noble

### Upcoming Events

Oct. 21	Regular Meeting @ 7:30 Election of Officers
Mar 17	Regular Meeting @7:30
April 21	Regular Meeting @7:30 Used equipment sale
April 30	(Sat) Annual Fish Fry @ Uibly Fox Hunters Club. Bring a dish to pass. Eat at 6:30 PM
May 19	Regular Meeting @7:30
June 16	Regular Meeting @7:30
June 18, 19	Thumb Offshore Challenge Tournament @ Port Austin & Grindstone City. Club to furnish 10 workers

## DNR and Legislative Report

### Harbor Beach Steelhead Net Pen Project 2011-2013

With the success of the 2010 Steelhead net pen project, we will continue through 2013. In 2011, 15,000 152 mm (6 in) steelhead will be placed in the net pen and 15,000 will be directly planted into Lake Huron. 2012 will see the same numbers in the net pens and direct plant. In 2013, 20,000 198mm (8 ½ in) steelhead will be net pen and directly planted into Lake Huron.

This research project will mean that the hatcheries will grow these fish to the recommended size by the middle of May and will deliver them to the net pens site.

These fish will be held for two weeks for accumulation to Lake Huron waters. These fish will have a coded wire tag (CWT) implanted in their nose and on the fin clip. If these plants are successful, all steelhead caught with an adipose fin clip will be kept by the angler and the head turned into established site.

Head returns are a must to insure the success of the program. The project success will basically be determined by the hatcheries ability to raise the fish to the desired size. Falling short of that will severely compromise the project. Other net pen projects are at Oscoda au Sable River and Harrisville pens.

Ken Merckel

### Fish Plantings 2010 through 2013

The numbers contained in this handout are the current Fish Stocking Requests for various ports and rivers. They are subject to occasional revision, but are current requests for 2010. Actual numbers stocked depend upon hatchery inventories, but are usually very close to the stocking request.

#### IOSCO COUNTY

Tawas Bay: 20,000 Brown trout – at Jerry’s Marina  
27,000 Chinook salmon – Tawas River  
10,000 Steelheads – Tawas River

Au Gres River: 30,000 Steelheads – 4.5 mi west of Lake Huron  
10,000 Brown trout – north of M-55

#### OGEMAW COUNTY

Rifle River: 50,000 Steelheads – at Selkirk  
15,000 Brown trout – spread over six sites

#### ISABELLA COUNTY

Chippewa River 12,650 Steelheads – west of Mount Pleasant

#### HURON COUNTY

Pigeon River: 6,300 Steelheads  
Pinnebog River: 15,850 Steelheads at M-25  
Port Austin: 72,000 Chinook salmon  
Harbor Beach: 20,000 Brown trout  
30,000 Steelheads (15k in net pens, 15k at DTE)  
160,000 Chinook salmon

#### SANILAC COUNTY

Port Sanilac 10,000 Brown trout  
30,000 Rainbow trout (Eagle Lake,  
36,000 Chinook salmon  
Lexington: 10,000 Brown trout  
30,000 Rainbow trout (Eagle Lake)  
36,000 Chinook salmon

## Steelhead plantings 2011 thru 2013

Number and size of Steelhead to be stocked via pen acclimation and directly into the river or open lake.

Year	Harbor Beach		Harrisville		AuSable River	
	Pen	Direct	Pen	Direct	Pen	Direct
2011	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	20,000	20,000
	152mm	152mm	152mm	152mm	198mm	198mm
2012	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	20,000	20,000
	152mm	152mm	198mm	198mm	152mm	152mm
2013	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	20,000	20,000
	198mm	198mm	152mm	152mm	152mm	152mm



September 1, 2010: Left to right, Ken Merckel, Jerry Lawrence and Dan Cruchon fishing out of Frankfort, MI. Despite the wind and rain we managed to catch 15 Chinook Salmon in Platte Bay.

### Ladies Night



August 19, 2010: Regular meeting was Ladies Night. The speaker was Ellen Volmering, a nutritionalist at harbor Beach Hospital. She kept everyone on the edge of their seats with her enthusiasm. She even had the guys asking questions about healthy eating. You can tell by the expression on her face that she love what she is doing. After her program everyone was treated with free ice cream cones from Papa G’s of Harbor Beach. All sugar free of course!

## Fishing Tip Corner

### SOMETHING NEW:

A little bit about myself. I bought my first boat in 1985 and started to fish the big pond (Lake Huron), just a weekend fisherman not a Pro. I joined the Thumb Chapter Steelheaders some years ago. I was thinking about shaking the newsletter a little with something new like putting a tip or two every month in the newsletter. These are only my thoughts, not directed to or at anyone. They may help a fellow angler as someone helped me through the years. So here it goes:

#### TIP #1 CLEAN DECK SAFTEY

I don't mean the deck on your house. I mean the one on your boat. Keep your deck, the working area in your boat where you set rods, fight fish and land fish clean. Keep the floor clear of things that will trip you or hurt others on the boat. Picture this: three guys on the boat, rods are all set and waiting for the first to rip. A rod goes off and one guy goes for the rod, falls over the cooler that has their drinks in it, but he gets the rod and is fighting the fish. He gets it close, "get the net" he yells. Second guy gets the net. In his route to the back of the boat, falls over the same cooler, falls down and breaks the handle. Now the guy driving the boat jumps up to help. He falls over the same cooler. Now boat takes a hard left and the lines get tangled. FISH GONE! Good day went bad. So keep your deck clean. Also, take that old bath towel that you were going to throw away and put on the boat. It works good to wipe fish slime and things down with after you get a fish.

#### TIP #2 CHEAP PAIR OF GLASSES

This one makes me sick to my stomach when I think about it. Picture this one: Nice July morning. Head out to your honey spot, you get the rods all set waiting for the first hit. Rod goes off. "Fish on" yelled as someone gets on the first fish. After a 10 minute fight, it's get the net time. All eyes are on the back of the boat to see the 12-15 lb king hit the net. The fish is in the prop wash. Rod is doubled over and the fish don't like what he sees and makes a run for it; only the fish spits the hook and here it comes about 60 mph your way. You duck and it gets the next guy. Not good! Good morning went bad in a hurry. Hook in the eye! No one needs this. It's not worth it. It can happen with any kind of fish. I would suggest that everyone who has a boat buy 3-4 pair of cheap glasses and put them on the boat. Make people wear them, they may thank you. Cheaper than an eye.

Keep the hooks sharp and the lines tight next month.

Thanks,

Grant Sadler, Kingchaser

Please take a look at your address block on the back of this newsletter. Just above your name is the date that your membership will expire. If your dues are coming up in the next quarter, please reduce our mailing cost by filling out the form below and sending it along with a check for \$30 to our membership chairman at:

Tom Smith  
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## Ammo's Off the Hook, But Sinkers Aren't

EPA says no to Lead Ammo ban, but they're going after lead sinkers  
Public comments are due by Sept 15, 2010

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, on Friday August 27 denied a petition calling for a ban on the production and distribution of lead hunting ammunition. EPA sent a letter to the petitioners explaining the rejection. See: [http://www.epa.gov/oppt/chemtest/pubs/Owens\\_Petition\\_Response.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/chemtest/pubs/Owens_Petition_Response.pdf)

Sinkers, and lead in fishing tackle however, is not off the hook. EPA said in their letter "As there are no similar jurisdictional issues relating to the agency's authority over fishing sinkers, EPA will continue reviewing a second part of the petition related to fishing sinkers." The EPA acceptance of the petition comes from a group of organizations that include the Center for Biological Diversity, PEER and the American Bird Conservancy.

In their position ([www.asafishing.org/government/lead\\_in\\_tackle.html](http://www.asafishing.org/government/lead_in_tackle.html)) the American Sportfishing Association says insufficient evidence exists to warrant state or federal bans on lead sinkers used for fishing. Habitat loss, the ASA asserts, is a far greater threat to all waterfowl species than lead sinkers. It would seem reasonable that anglers remind the EPA that solid scientific evidence to warrant that ban simply does not exist.

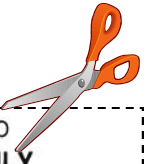
EPA's press release reads in part:

"EPA is taking action on many fronts to address major sources of lead in our society, such as eliminating childhood exposures to lead; however, EPA was not and is not considering taking action on whether the lead content in hunting ammunition poses an undue threat to wildlife.

"As there are no similar jurisdictional issues relating to the agency's authority over fishing sinkers, EPA – as required by law – will continue formally reviewing a second part the petition related to lead fishing sinkers."

Their news release on the matter is here: [http://www.epa.gov/oppt/chemtest/pubs/Owens\\_Petition\\_Response.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/chemtest/pubs/Owens_Petition_Response.pdf)

The EPA is required to issue their decision on the petition no later than November 1, 2010.



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# 2010 Pig Roast

Our Annual Pig Roast was held on August 1st. It was a huge success! The weather was fantastic which helped to draw one of the biggest crowds we've had in a long time. The group was larger than anticipated and the poor folks whose table was called last didn't have much food to choose

from. All that will be corrected next year as we will order more meat and potatoes. The event is our biggest money maker. Special thanks go out to: Nancy Vatter & Kattie Christensen for the roast beef, Connie & Bob Jackson for tables, coffee and pig pot, Dave Christy for raffles and Suzan & Ray Bugg for the P/A system, last but not least was Steve Lepeak for the 50/50 raffle.



Our Annual Pig Roast had a new feature. Annette Smith from Let's Go Fishing put together 5 baskets full of goodies and we had a silent auction. It went very well. Shown is Marian Lawrence who bid on a free nights lodging at Holiday Inn in Bad Axe., dinner for two at China King, a bottle of wine and two glasses, and a necklace and earrings.

## Raffle Winners



First Place:  
Shirley Kulish



Left to right, Doug Vatter, Grant Sadler, and Jim Jennings say the pig is almost ready for the table. Great job again and we will see you next year.



Second Place:  
Ben Schwab  
Ben took a bit of his winnings and joined the club. Welcome!



Third Place:  
Our treasurer,  
Phil Allen

# MICHIGAN STEELHEADERS

## THUMB CHAPTER

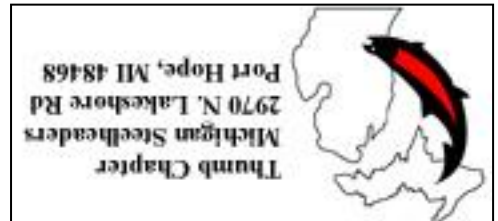


Taken at the Can2Can Tourney



June, 2010

Temp-Return Service Requested



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Visit [www.thumb.michigansteelheaders.org](http://www.thumb.michigansteelheaders.org)  
Sign up for email delivery of this newsletter!

Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Ugly Fox Hunters Club on M-19, two miles south of M-142. Board of Directors meet @ 6:30 PM and Regular meeting comes to order @ 7:30