



# MICHIGAN STEELHEADERS THUMB CHAPTER

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

## President's Message

April, 2011

### Greetings from the Wheelhouse

For those of you that went south and enjoyed the cold and miserable weather and those that stayed in Michigan and experienced the snowiest winter in many years, I hope this letter finds everyone well. I'm going to have a long talk with our friend Mother Nature. She is either misguided or just plain uncooperative because she dumped a major amount of snow in Michigan instead of in the far north where it was needed. As a result the water level in the lakes is extremely low. It behooves everyone to check out their favorite launch ramp to make sure there is enough water to float the boat. But, as always those of us that enjoy the lake will find a way.

It's time to start the cycle all over again in preparation for the upcoming fishing season. Get the boat and gear out and make sure it is ready to go just in case spring may be just around the corner. In spite of the low water level and the potential \$4.00 per gallon gas prices, like most of you I'm chomping at the bit to get on the lake. It's been a long winter.

I attended the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee meeting on March 6th. It was reported that the walleye population in Saginaw Bay was down slightly, but should not have a negative impact on the fishery. The walleye caught this year could on the average be even larger than in previous years. The major topics of discussions pertained to the planting of Cisco (Lake Herring) in Lake Huron and the future of the Chinook planting program, both of which appear to be up in the air. The Cisco program, (which by the way is in its third year with absolutely no results or conclusions) is still being studied, but under consideration. This is another good example of the "same old same old" procrastination. The Chinook planting program is still with out a doubt, a sacred cow and is being handled like a hot potato. No one wants to stick their neck out and admit it's a continual waste of money, especially in Lake Huron. This money could surely be spent more wisely. At least there is now an open discussion about these major issues. There appears to be a light at the end of the tunnel instead of an oncoming freight train.

2011 will be the last year for planting Brown Trout at Harbor Beach unless those people that catch the browns make a concerted effort to report their catch to the DNR. It behooves all of us to record each brown caught as to the length, weight and the date caught. Above all we must collect the stomach of those browns caught so they can determine what they are feeding on. In my opinion, the Brown Trout program could be potentially one of the more successful programs the DNR has come up with. If we want this program to continue we must help the DNR collect the necessary data. The criteria is that there must be at least a 5% return rate to reinstitute the program. It doesn't seem to matter that the return rate on Chinook salmon is only .073%. Another argument against the Brown Trout program was that it is too expensive to raise them to the size required. The cost of each brown is approximately \$7.00 per fish. In my simple little mind, if I take the total cost of those Chinook planted and divide it by the number of Chinook caught I come up with a cost of over \$3000.00 per fish. For my money I'll take the Brown Trout program.

WE WILL NOT SEND OUT A POST CARD AS A REMINDER OF THE APRIL, 21st MEETING AND THE APRIL 30TH FISH FRY. The meeting on April 21st will be devoted entirely to the Sea grant 2011 Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshop which will start at 6:00 p.m. and run until approximately 9:00 p.m. The Sea Grant people have put together a tremendous amount of information to present to us. Hopefully we will have enough time for the presentation.

The summer of 2011 is going to be a busy one for the Thumb Chapter Steelheaders. We are going to need a lot of volunteer help for the two tournaments and the net pen project, so check the Thumb Chapter calendar of events and set aside some time to participate where you can.

Keep the wind at your back and your feet dry. See you on the water.

Your Prez,

Jack R Noble

## SPECIAL MEETING TIME THIS MONTH

April 21<sup>st</sup>

Due to the 2011 Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshop, this months meeting will start at 6:00. See insert for additional details.

## What Goes Around Comes Around.

We in the Steelheaders organization work hard to improve all types of fishing possibilities all across the great State of Michigan. We are not alone in this endeavor as many states have similar programs attempting to improve the quality fishing experience for their residents. This is not a new idea either. Many years ago our conservation minded predecessors here in Michigan were dealing with some of the same issues we are facing today in our modern era.

A few days ago while reading a State publication on the trials and tribulation of our predecessors, it struck me how what goes around comes around years later in the fisheries business and how an old idea will become new again if you wait around long enough. Let's look at a few paragraphs from a 1980's article and see if you have the same feeling.

In the early decades of the 1800s, fishing was confined almost exclusively to Indians and to employees of the Hudson Bay and Northwest fur trading companies. Others took fish mainly for home consumption. At that time there was a great abundance of fish, which made it difficult to convince anyone that the future might be any different. Nevertheless, through unregulated fishing and destruction of habitat the fish supply had decreased dramatically by the 1870s and Michigan citizens began to take notice and push for closed seasons on fishing.

That same year, the Legislature established the State Board of Fish Commissioners, making Michigan the eighteenth state to embark on fish culture work. The board was charged with selecting a suitable location for a "fish-breeding establishment for the artificial propagation and cultivation of whitefish and such other kinds of the better class food fishes as they may direct, upon the best terms possible."

With the funds appropriated for the Board of Fish Commissioner's first two years, the first fish hatchery was built at Crystal Springs near present day Niles. Nearly 9 million whitefish were hatched at this facility and planted throughout all of Michigan in 1876. In a few years time, that number grew to 150 million. The first recorded plantings of brook trout were made in 1879, the year Oren Chase invented the hatching jar, from the same facility. The species adapted so well to streams in the Lower Peninsula that in 1884 the Fish Commission reported, "The success attained in brook trout has been very great and gratifying." 1884 also marked the first planting of German brown trout in U.S. waters. A branch of the Pere Marquette River received 4,900 young brown trout in April of that year. By 1888, the counties receiving brook trout numbered 46, and during the 1890s, this species was without question the most abundant and widespread game fish found in Michigan rivers and streams. Yet by 1927, many anglers abandoned their favorite "fishing holes" because of the disappearance of brook trout from waters where they had once been so abundant.

Where did the fish go? Consider this: In the 1870s and 80s, when the railroads were extended northward into the Upper Peninsula,

railroad cars were rented for fishing excursions to the north. One line, the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad, even published a brochure advertising itself as the "Fishing Line." Regulations were practically nonexistent. Non-residents were not required by law to have a fishing license until 1914, and residents could fish for trout without a license until 1928 and for panfish until 1933. Consider, too, the expansion of the brown trout, which by the mid 1920s had replaced brook trout in many streams throughout the Lower Peninsula.

It was hard not to notice the decline in fish populations, and as early as 1875, uniform laws for Great Lakes commercial fishing were urged. In 1886, the Seventh State Fisheries Report stated, "Artificial propagation alone cannot accomplish the result (of restoring the fisheries). Neither can legal regulations do it alone, within a period that will avail anything for one generation, and possibly not even then. The two things are mutually dependent conditions. They must concur to assure valuable and lasting success."

The establishment of the first fish hatchery was the beginning of a program that by 1921 had grown to include 12 hatcheries. An addition to the hatchery system was the creation of the Wolverine "fish car" in 1914. Originally a Pullman coach, this railroad car was converted to what can best be described as a traveling fish hatchery. While fish were not actually hatched aboard the car, it traveled throughout the state dropping off milk cans filled with them for planting in creeks and rivers. In cooperation with the State Board of Fish Commissioners, local sportsman handled much of the planting. More than 100 million young fish were released in this way to state waters during the years of the fish car. After fish were released, the milk cans were returned to local depots and shipped free of charge via state railroads back to a state hatchery, which had been built in 1888 at Paris.

In 1927, a creel census was begun by the Fish Division of the Conservation Department in order to inventory fish populations and provide direction for management programs. The thirties saw fisheries management broaden to encompass habitat improvement on trout streams and an extensive fisheries research program. By 1939, Michigan was issuing more fishing licenses than any other state. In 1940, 28 new fishing sites were acquired from fishing license funds, and by 1947 there were 105 such sites on streams and 230 on lakes.

In 1945, the first coho salmon were planted in Oakland County's Deep Lake, along with more than 2,000 fingerling chinook salmon. In 1966, nearly 400,000 coho fingerlings we planted in Bear Creek and 264,000 in the Platte River, which run into Lake Michigan. Another 200,000 were released into the Big Huron River, which flows into Lake Superior. The growth and survival of the fish was excellent, particularly in Lake Michigan, and a thriving

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

sport fishery developed. It was maintained largely by annual plantings, although the salmon reproduced successfully in many streams. The success of the pacific salmon and the recovery of the lake trout gave rise to the best freshwater fishing in the world. Little did anyone know 20 sum years later that just like our predecessors in 1927 Michigan Fisherman would be standing on the banks of there favorite "fishing hole" wondering, "Where did the fish go" as the salmon fishery crashed in the Great Lakes! Since that tragic time period salmon fishing has been on the up-swing in Lake Michigan and never did come back fully in Lake Huron. The work to make things better is never ending.

Lucky for all of us there are people in the Michigan DNR and groups like The Michigan Steelheaders, to name one, working constantly to bring back and keep fishing like it was "In The Good Ol' Days." As a member of the Steelheaders you should be proud you are part of a dedicated and forward thinking group working to keep fishing alive and well in the Great State of Michigan!

Submitted by Steve Lepeak

## **Thumb Steelheaders to Raise 15,000 Fingerling Steelhead for the Second Straight Year.**

Our thanks go out to the following clubs who donated money for us to build two more pens and nets, buy three more docks and all the accessories it took for the project. The clubs who donated were: Metro West Steelheaders, Flint River Steelheaders, Saginaw-Midland Steelheaders, Blue Water Sportfishing Association, Sanilac County Sportfishing and Hunting Association and the Thumb Area Charter Captains. We will receive 15,000 Steelhead again this year on May 17th and will feed them four times a day until the water temperature reaches around 65 degrees. We think with the great success we had last year, the DNR will make this a five year program. Again, without the monetary help from the above mentioned clubs, this program

## **Fish Fry April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Don't miss the Fish Fry coming up soon. It's a great opportunity to talk about the upcoming fishing season and reacquaint yourself with fellow members after a long winter.

Bring a dish to share.

Dinner starts at 6:30 at the Ugly Fox Hunters Club

## **Hot & Hearty Salmon Goulash**

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 2 Tablespoon butter                                      | 1 medium Onion, Chopped      |
| 1 stalk celery, chopped thin                             | 2 cloves garlic, minced fine |
| 1/3 chopped , roasted red pepper                         | 4 cups beef broth            |
| 1 tablespoon paprika                                     | 1 bay leaf                   |
| Pinch of thyme   | 2 tablespoons tomato paste   |
| 1/3 pound, dumpling egg noodles                          | Sour Cream                   |
| Capers to suit   | Salt & Pepper to taste       |
| 1 pound skinless, boneless Salmon, cut in 3/4-inch cubes |                              |

In a soup pot, melt butter over medium heat and sauté the onions, celery, and garlic until onions are transparent. Add red peppers, broth, tomato paste bay leaf and other spices, stir to combine, heat it thoroughly and let simmer for about 15 minuets. Bring a pot of water to boil and cook egg noodles per package instructions. Put Salmon in the goulash right after you start cooking the noodles. When the noodles are done, drain and add them to the goulash. Simmer until Salmon is cooked through. Ladle into bowls, giving each a healthy dollop of sour cream. Sprinkle with a little paprika and add a few capers. Your favorite beer or wine compliments this dish well.

## **UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS**

**May 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Can2Can, Harbor Beach Marina**

**May 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Offshore Challenge, Harbor Beach Marina**

Please plan to help us work these two important tournaments. The Thumb Chapter will receive a portion of the registration fees in exchange for our support. Help re-establish HB as a place to fish! Contact Jack Noble for add'l details.

# MICHIGAN STEELHEADERS

## THUMB CHAPTER

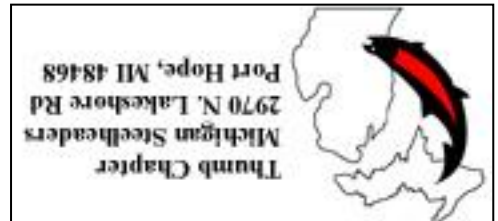


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April, 2011

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## Check Out Our New Website!

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

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# DNRE Returning Walleye Fry Production to Historic Levels

Dec. 14, 2010

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has begun gearing up to return hatchery production of walleyes to historic levels.

The DNRE plans to take some 50 million eggs this spring to produce fry for pond-rearing and direct stocking, an eight-fold increase over the last two years.

Since 2006, the DNRE has cut back on most of its walleye rearing activities because of the presence of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) in the brood-stock waters. Now, after several years of testing, a technique has been found to disinfect walleye eggs and prevent spreading VHS. As a result, the DNRE will now resume large-scale rearing and stocking of walleyes.

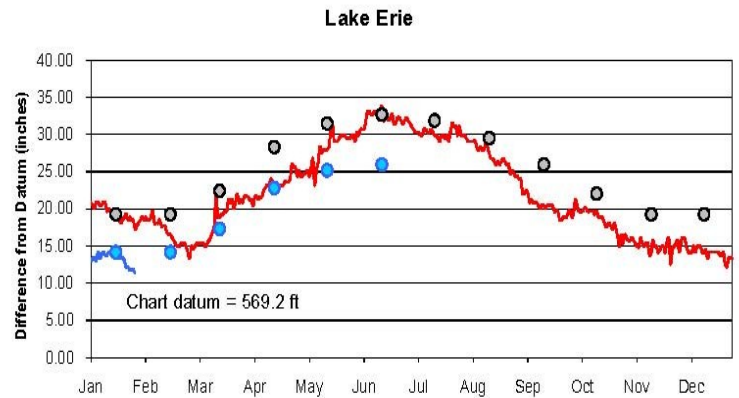
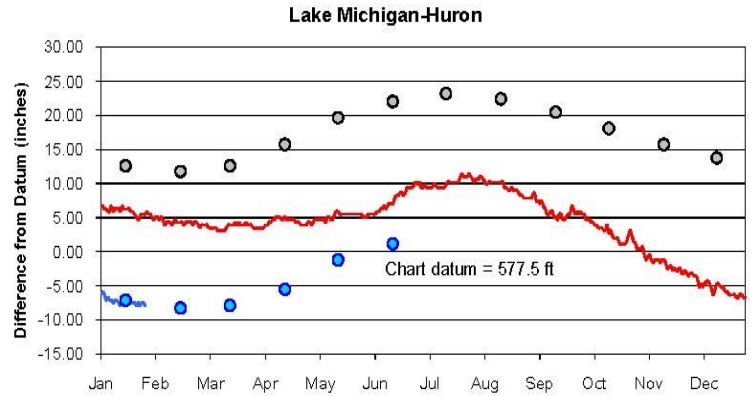
"In a perfect world, we wouldn't have cut our walleye fry production," DNRE Director Rebecca Humphries said. "But the specter of bringing VHS into our hatchery system or transferring VHS to new waters was just too risky. The ecosystem is constantly changing and our management practices must change with it. We are pleased that an effective treatment for walleye eggs against VHS has been found and we're ramping up our production accordingly."

The DNRE expects it to take two years to return to full production of walleye fry. A number of the rearing ponds, which have been idled for the last several years, are in need of maintenance before they can be brought back on line for production.

Nonetheless, the DNRE expects to produce at least 80 percent of the total capacity for walleye fry in 2011 and be back to full production in 2012. For more information, visit [www.michigan.gov/fishing](http://www.michigan.gov/fishing).

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment is committed to the conservation, protection, management, and accessible use and enjoyment of the state's environment, natural resources, and related economic interests for current and future generations. Learn more at [www.michigan.gov/dnre](http://www.michigan.gov/dnre).

# Lake Level Forecasts



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  
1580 Deckerville Rd.  
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DATE \_\_\_\_\_  NEW MEMBER  RENEWAL SENIOR:  YES  NO

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
AREA CODE (\_\_\_\_)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ No. in Household \_\_\_\_\_

BOAT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PORT OR STREAM \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE OF FISHING:  Stream  Lake  Both

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