

Lake Michigan Fisheries Management and Habitat



We need alewives to get salmon

Biologist calls food fish key to loss of big lake salmon

By KURT MUELLER
Outdoor Editor

forage base, Coshun said, compared with only 3 percent for chubs and 9.4 percent smelt.

By 1987, the last good year of chinook salmon fishing on Lake Michigan, the forage base had completely turned around with up 85 percent of it, alewives 11 percent and smelt

2 Section 2 Chicago Tribune, Thursday, November 28, 1991 N S

State reducing chinook salmon released into Lake Michigan

By Rob Karwath

In a show of concern about declining fishing conditions on Lake Michigan, state officials said Wednesday that they will sharply reduce the release of hatchery-raised chinook salmon and further limit the type and number of fish that may be caught.

The state Department of Conservation said it will reduce by nearly 25 percent the number of young chinook introduced into the lake starting next spring. It will not increase the release for five years.

And though the state will continue to allow fishermen to catch up to five fish a day, they will be limited to no more than two lake trout and no more than three of any other variety.

Fishermen currently may take up to five of any variety except lake trout. They are limited to three lake trout a day.

Conservation Director Brent Manning said his agency took both moves in response to concerns that fishing conditions have declined on Lake Michigan because of an imbalance in the food chain and because more people are fishing.

The three other Lake Michigan

states—Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan—either have already taken similar moves or are considering doing so, Illinois officials said.

Officials are reducing the release of chinook because the fish have been too successful at eating alewives, the tiny fish that were washing up dead in large numbers in the late 1960s and fouling Chicago-area beaches. The alewives prompted the chinook introduction in 1969.

Chinooks' voracious appetite for alewives has thrown the lake's food chain out of balance. The depletion forced chinook to turn to bloater chubs and smelts for food and is linked to an outbreak of bacterial kidney disease in fish.

Fishermen and conservation experts speculate that chinook are being "stressed out" by the increasingly difficult search for alewives. This reduces their immune systems and makes them more vulnerable to the fatal kidney disease.

Fishermen and conservation groups applauded the state's actions and said they are long overdue.

"It was something that had to be done," said Jerry Pabst, past

president of the Midwest Charter Association and a long-time angler. "If we can bring back and keep the lake's alewives, we all have better fish."

Pabst and other anglers say their daily catch restricts some fishermen, particularly those who like lake trout.

"Sure, when you charter a boat you have a limit, but how often do you fish?" said Cass of Salmon Unlimited, the Northwest Side.

"I can live with it," he said. "I can give our fish a better chance to survive."

The state will cut the release of hatchery-raised chinook from 400,000 to 360,000 from 4

Chinook-release the lake states have been successful that alewives only about 10 percent for larger fish, do than 75 percent in

Although the state will reduce the chinook release, it will maintain the current annual stocking of 100,000 lake trout, 100,000 rainbow trout, 100,000 brown trout and 300,000 coho salmon in the lake.

sh stocking and catch statistics from the late 1980s. The sad story of the chinook collapse. In 1987, the chinook harvest was the best ever in the sport catch.

The catch that year was supposed to be big. It was the state's record stocking of three million chinook salmon in Lake Michigan in 1984.

It yielded almost as many chinook salmon in Lake Michigan next year, 1985. And then, in 1988, the bottom fell out. Sport anglers caught only half as many fish in 1988 as they had in 1987.

Chinooks' signals have DNRs worried over lake's balance

In the late 1980s, a stroller along Lake Michigan's shoreline almost always would pass

streams annually.

By 1986, the lake had obviously overreached its carrying capacity

on importing West Coast stock to the Great Lakes in effect to prevent bringing any new area.

In stocking, he said, must, in the future, involve not just Lake Michigan, but also Wisconsin.

Fisheries Management

- recreational sport
- charter
- commercial

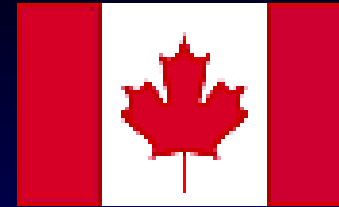
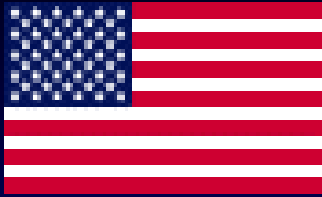


- trout and salmon
- yellow perch
- bloater chub
- bass, bluegill, rockbass

Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan & Strategy (CWCP)

Lake Michigan Key Actions

- No net loss habitat
- Prevent invasive species
- Restore lake trout



A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries



CORA



Wisconsin



Illinois



Indiana



Michigan



Great Lakes Fishery Commission



Minnesota



New York



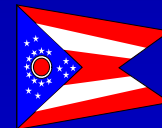
Pennsylvania



Ontario



GLIFWC



Ohio

**FISH-COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES
FOR LAKE MICHIGAN**



Great Lakes Fishery Commission

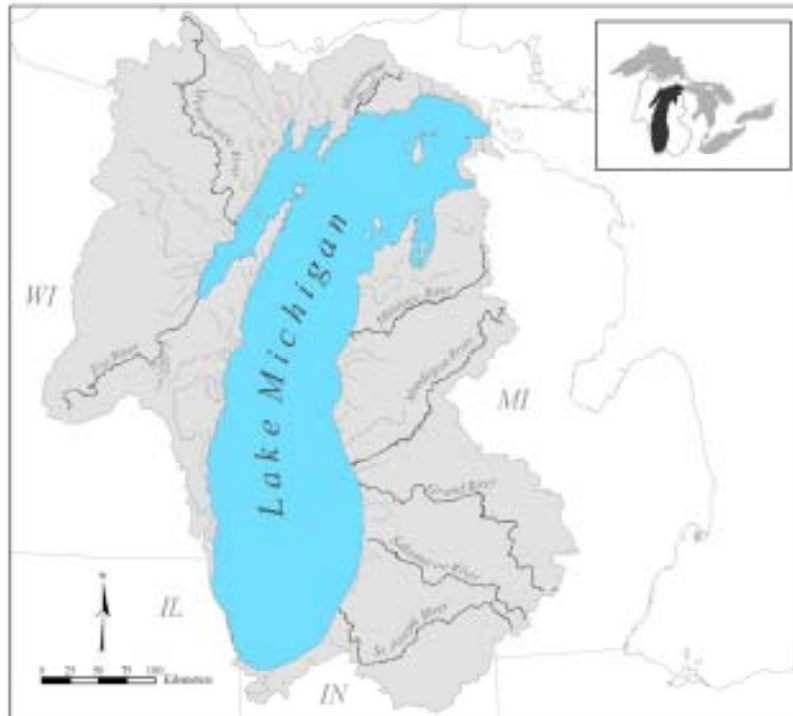
SPECIAL PUBLICATION 95-3

- Salmonine objective
- Planktivore objective
- Inshore fish objective
- Benthivore objective
- Sea lamprey objective
- Other species objective
- Physical/chemical habitat objective

Physical/chemical habitat objective

- Protect and enhance and rehabilitate
- No net loss habitat with emphasis on historic riverine habitats
- Reduction and elimination of toxic chemicals

LAKE MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES



Edward Rutherford
Emily Marshall
David Clapp
William Hokus
Tom Gorezeflo
Tom Trudeau

University of Michigan
University of Michigan
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Chippewa/Ottawa Resource Authority
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

- Tributary areas
- Coastal wetlands
- Reefs
- Nearshore habitats
- Fish community
- Water quality

EO #1 – *Protecting and restoring connectivity and quality tributary spawning and nursery habitats*

- What impediments to achieving FCOs
- What available habitats and condition
- What impacted species
- Information and research needs

<http://www.glfc.org/lakecom/lmc/lmenvironobj.pdf>

Summary

- Each lake & state different
- Little natural shoreline interface
- Little information on offshore habitat
- Habitat modification difficult, \$\$\$
- Lake Michigan very perturbed system
- Managed for naturalized species

National Fish Habitat Action Plan

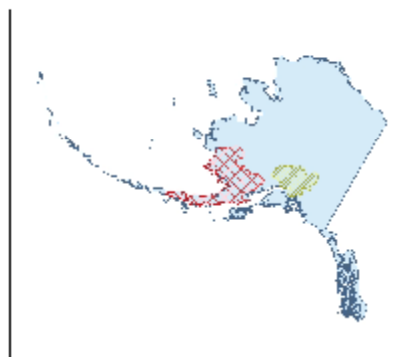
search...

- Home
- Action Plan
- Partnerships
- Find your niche
- Waters to watch
- Science and data
- Contacts

Partnerships

Partner profiles

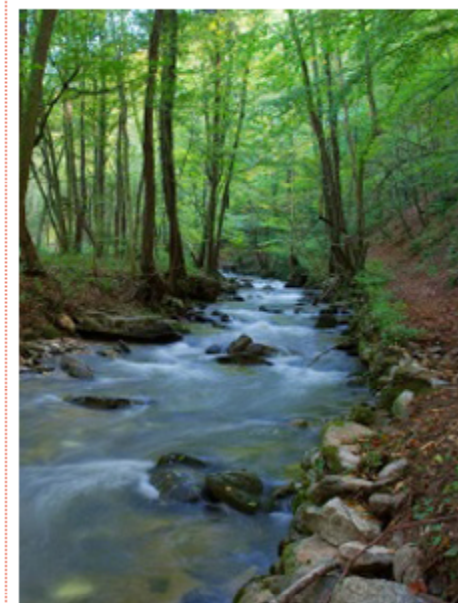
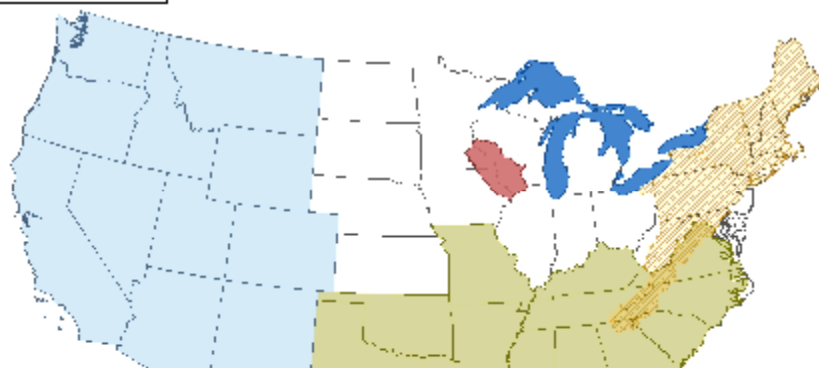
Fish Habitat Partnerships



Fish Habitat Partnerships September 2008



- Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership
- Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
- Western Native Trout Initiative
- Driftless Area Restoration Effort
- Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership
- Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership



recent updates

- Midwest Glacial Lakes "Candidate" Partnership

