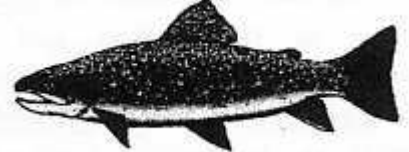


DOWNRIGGER



Presidents Message

Glenn Uhl put on a slide presentation at the October Membership meeting. It was very informative about the opportunities to camp at the National Lake Shore campground at Platte River and salmon fishing in Platte Bay. Club member Jim Howenstine has fished here many years in the fall and would like the club to have a get together there next fall. Not a tournament situation, just a fun weekend or more. I'm planning on participating, and I'm sure it would be a fun thing for the club also. I fished the September tournament at Harbor Beach with Ryan and Stacy Nims; we didn't have a big turnout but the weather was decent and we did catch some fish.

We won't be having another membership meeting until January 19th, 2005. The board decided to not have a meeting in November due to conflicts with the deer season. Our December meeting will be the Christmas party at the Newsted's house on Marvin Rd. in Independence Twp. The date is Saturday December 11th. Look for more information elsewhere in this Downrigger. The club is going to participate in the Novi Expo Center Sportfishing and Boat Show January 13th thru 16th, 2005; we will need volunteers to help man the booth. Typically Free Parking and Free Admission is one incentive to volunteers. We can arrange for individuals that volunteer t have time to wander about the other exhibits along with doing a shift or two at the booth. You would be greatly assisting the promotion of the club and your help would be appreciated and welcomed. We will need volunteers to head up and participate in a tournament committee. There is some interest in cutting back on the number of tournaments for 2005. Your input is needed and would be greatly appreciated. Call me at 248-625-3617 with your comments.

We will be electing new officers in December and we could use your help. Why not volunteer for one of the posts? Most of the posts for Officers have incumbent Officers but the post of President is open. I have served 2 years and the by-laws for the club have term limits of 2 years for officers so the post of President is open. Contact me 2438-625-3617 if you are interested in serving on the board or as an officer or in any way.

We still have Silver Streak 25th Anniversary spoons available. The price is \$3.00 each and any member may purchase as many as they would like up to 6 dozen.

Glenn Uhl and Ice Floe Joe Zikewich will be putting on a presentation on ice fishing for the January membership meeting. I'm sure it will be very informative. In addition Glenn is going to make up a special tip-up rod for the raffle that night. Hope to see you all there.

Happy Holidays to all and hope to see you at the Christmas Party,

Bill Purves

Up Coming Events:

December 8, 2004 Board Meeting and Pizza dinner at Geno's in Keego Harbor 7pm

December 11, 2004 **MARK YOUR CALENDAR** December 11, 2004

**Oakland County Sport
Fishing Association
Christmas Party
At the Newsted's House,
5250 Marvin Road,
Clarkston**

**(Dixie to East on Maybe
Road to Marvin to
Newsted's.
Maybe is the first traffic
light south of M-15 on
Dixie)**

**Social hour at 6 PM,
Dinner @ 7PM
Provided: Meat, table
service, ice, soft drinks,
punch and coffee**

Bring: a Dish to share

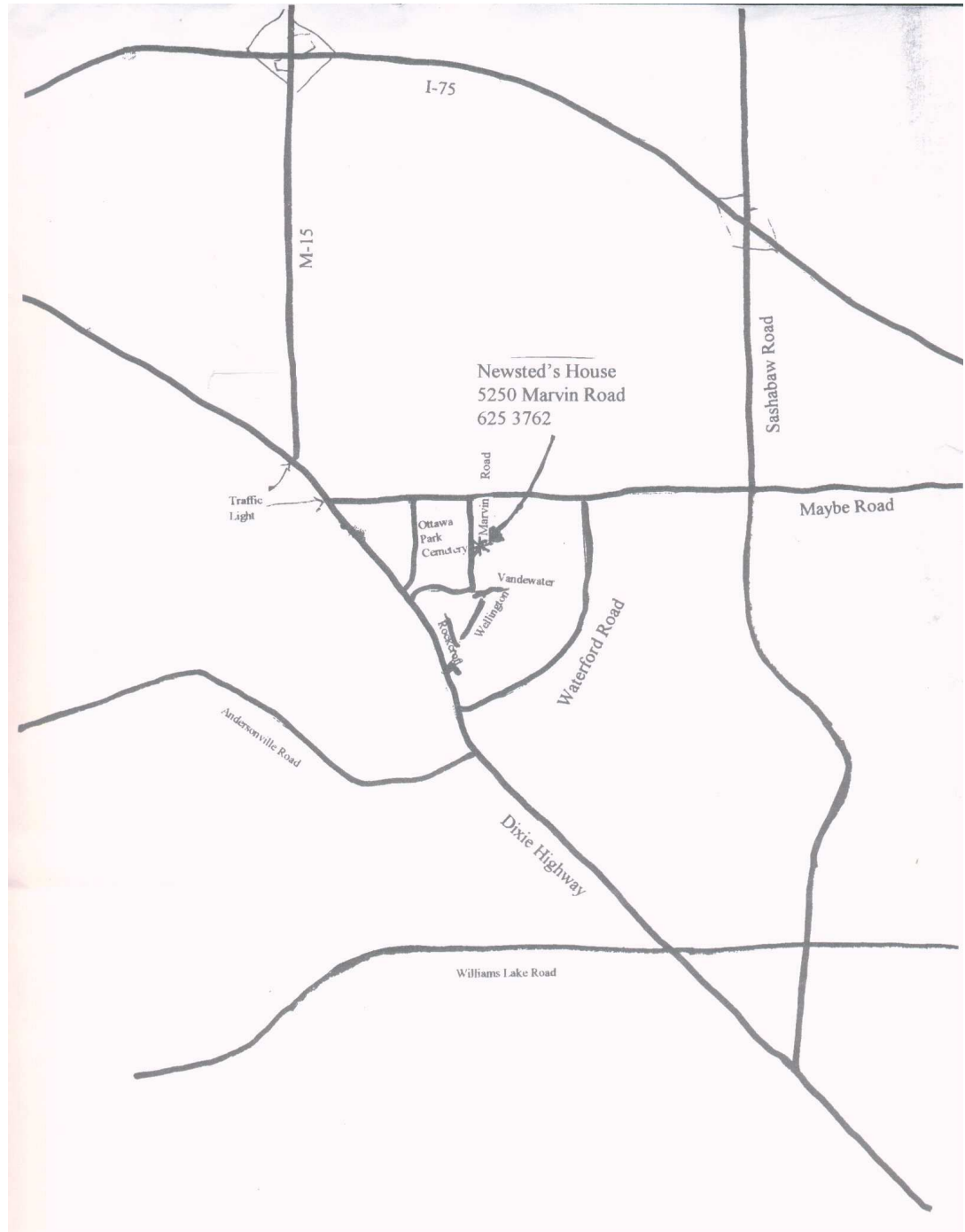
**Optional: \$5 gift to
exchange marked male or
female**

**Your own liquor if desired
There is also a \$5.00 grab
bag at this event. Males
bring a male gift and
females bring a female gift.**

**Call: Marti Newsted @ 248
625 3762 to reserve your
place. If you haven't RSVP
already please do so and let
Marti know what you will
be bringing as a dish to
pass.**

Please call by December 4, 2004

Wednesday January 12th The next Membership meeting will take place on.
January 13-16th Novi Expo Center Fishing show



2004 Captain of the year !!

The results are in. This year was a very close race. We have a tie for the second time in OCSA'S history. President Bill Purves, captain of The Last One, tied with Last years Captain of the year Geoff White, captain of Hawg Slayer. Each Captain had 19 points.

Steve Bruford, a previous Captain of the year, came in second place with 14 points. Following Steve was another former Captain of the year Bill Anglebrandt. Right behind Bill Anglebrandt was a new OCSA member Bob Schultz with 9 points.

Congratulations to all and it looks like next year will be a good contest for Captain of the year and watch out for Bob Schulz.

The top five finishers in each category are as follows:

Captain of the Year

Captain	Angler	Fish Caught	Place	Tournament & Date	Points Earned
1 st Bill Purves	Warren Newstead	5# 2oz Walleye	2 nd	Lake Erie June 20 th	2
	Warren Newstead	4# 8oz Walleye	3 rd	Lake Erie June 20 th	1
	Bill Purves	3# 0oz Walleye	2 nd	Lake Erie June 26 th	2
	Warren Newstead	6# 5oz Lake Trout	3 rd	Harbor Beach July 10 th	1
	Warren Newstead	6# 13oz Lake Trout	1 st	Harbor Beach July 11 th	3
	Warren Newstead	5# 15oz Lake Trout	2 nd	Harbor Beach July 11 th	2
	Ryan Nims	7# 4oz King	1 st	Harbor Beach September 18 th	3
	Ryan Nims	5# 0oz King	2 nd	Harbor Beach September 18 th	2
	Stacy Nims	7# 10oz Brown	1 st	Harbor Beach September 18 th	3
	<u>Total</u>				
1 st Geoff White	Geoff White	3# 6oz Walleye	1 st	Lake Erie June 19 th	3
	Stan Pietrazk	2# 6oz Walleye	2 nd	Lake Erie June 19 th	2
	Mark Morris	3# 9oz Walleye	1 st	Lake Erie June 26 th	3
	Mark Morris	2# 6oz Walleye	3 rd	Lake Erie June 26 th	1
	Mark Morris	3# 1oz Walleye	1 st	Lake Erie June 27 th	3
	Mark Morris	2# 9oz Walleye	2 nd	Lake Erie June 27 th	2
	Kristie White	3# 2oz King	2 nd	Harbor Beach July 11 th	2
	Geoff White	18# 11oz King	1 st	Arcadia August 29 th	3
	<u>Total</u>				
3 rd Steve Bruford	Michael Bruford	2# 4oz Brown	2 nd	Arcadia May 1 st	2
	Steve Bruford	7# 1oz Steelhead	1 st	Arcadia May 1 st	3
	Greg Elliott	8# 4 oz Brown	1 st	Arcadia May 2 nd	3
	Greg Elliott	23# 6 oz King	1 st	Arcadia August 21 st	3
	Dragon Stojkovic	5# 7oz Coho	1 st	Arcadia August 29 th	3
<u>Total</u>					<u>14</u>
4 th Bill Anglebrandt					<u>Total</u> 11
5 th Bob Schulz					<u>Total</u> 9

“2004 The Largest Fish”

As Bill mentioned in his Presidents message, the club had a successful year. Hear are the largest fish caught during our 2004 tournaments. Congratulations to all of you who caught these fish.

<u>King Salmon</u>	23 lbs. 6 oz.	Caught August 21st at Arcadia By Greg Elliott on “Scooter II” Capt. Steve Bruford
<u>Coho Salmon</u>	5 lbs. 7 oz	Caught August 29 th at Arcadia By Dragon Stojkovic on “Teddy Bear III” Capt. Steve Bruford
<u>Lake Trout</u>	15 lbs. 0 oz.	Caught May 1 st at Arcadia By Dick Hickson on “My Princess” Capt. Robert Karagosian
<u>Steelhead</u>	7 lbs. 1oz.	Caught May 1 st at Arcadia By Steve Bruford on “Fish’n Again” Capt. Steve Bruford
<u>Brown Trout</u>	8 lbs. 13 oz.	Caught July 10 th at Harbor Beach By Glenn Appel on “Dad’s Toy” Capt. Glenn Appel
<u>Walleye</u>	6 lbs. 8 oz.	Caught June 20 th At Lake Erie By Jeff Loehr on “Fish Dinner” Capt. Steve Loehr

2004 Angler of the Year!!

By coincidence the Angler of the year won by the same number of points as Captain of the year, 19 points. It was no surprise to most of us that Mark Morris has won again. Mark is OCSA’S undisputed numero uno angler. He has won every year. Runner up Steve Loehr had 16 points. One more first place fish for Steve would have tied him with Mark. Stacy Nims tied with Jeff Loehr for third place with 6 points. The Nims family tallied up 13 points. Stacy(mom)had 6 ;Ryan(dad) had 3. The Nims children: Trevin had 2, Ashley came in with 1 and Mitch had 1.The kids all enjoy fishing and Ryan and Stacy are congratulated for involving their kids in fishing.

This year every kid age 16 and under who earned points in the tournaments will be given a trophy. The trophy winners are : Brandon Schultz, Great lakes; Trevin ,Ashley and Mitch Nims, Inland Lakes. If I have missed any Child please let me know so I can order the trophy.

Call Mike Odle 248 673 3759

Angler of the Year

Angler	Tournament & Date	Fish Caught	Place	Points Earned
1 st Mark Morris	Pontiac Lake May 8 th	1# 2oz Bass	1 st	3
		1# 1oz Bass	2 nd (tie)	2
		1# 3oz Catfish	1 st	3
		1# 0oz Catfish	3 rd	1
		2# 1oz Walleye	1 st	3
	Pontiac Lake June 12 th	1# 7oz Pan fish	2 nd	2
		2# 11oz Smallmouth	1 st	3
	Long Lake July 3 rd	1# 3oz Largemouth	3 rd	1
		1# 3oz Walleye	3 rd	1
		Total		19
2 nd Steve Loehr	Pontiac Lake May 8 th	1# 1oz Bass	2 nd (tie)	2
	Pontiac Lake June 12 th	6# Northern pike	1 st	3
		1# 11oz pan fish	1 st	3
	Long Lake July 3 rd	3# 0oz Northern pike	1 st	3
		1# 9oz Largemouth	1 st	3
		0.5# Pan fish	2 nd	2
	Total		16	
3 rd Jeff Loehr	Pontiac Lake May 8 th	1# 3oz Pan fish	1 st	3
	Pontiac Lake June 12 th	1# 4oz Largemouth	1 st	3
	Total		6	
3 rd Stacy Nims	Long Lake July 3 rd	1# 13oz Walleye	1 st	3
		1# 12oz Walleye	2 nd	2
		1# 3oz Walleye	3 rd	1
	Total		6	
5 th Ryan Nims	Long Lake	0.7# Pan fish	1st	Total 3

Tournament Insight

Salmon/ Trout Tournament - Arcadia & Frankfort Saturday & Sunday - August 28th & 29th, 2004 Tournament Results

This was the second weekend at Arcadia for the club. Weather and water temperature affected fishing in the week between. The creative anglers caught fish. Some fished as deep as 105', looking for that temperature break and the Kings it usually attracts. Lure selection included spoons and flies. Many in the Dipsy Diver crowd ran their rigs out 130' at a setting of 2.5 to 3.5. The Hoochie Mama gang sent their rigs far back from the downrigger releases. Spoon size didn't seem to matter once fish were found. A few lead lines (out to ten colors) were also used. The water conditions included wind and waves but were manageable.

A lunch was served on Saturday at the Point Arcadia club house with sloppy joes and potato salad as the menu. Elise, Jeannie and I thank all the OCSA club members and guests who came and fished and helped make the tournament a success. See you "On The Water"... Capt Ed Matusko, Diehard



Saturday, August 28, 2004

11 boats, 32 anglers, 18 fish weighed in

Boats & Crews:

Adventure II Capt Walt Van Conant, Pat Van Conant, Warren Newsted, Marty Newsted
 Bounty Hunter Capt Bob Schultz, Brandon Schultz
 Diehard Capt Ed Matusko, Elise Matusko
 Fish Dinner Capt Steve Loehr, Jeff Loehr, Leroy Brown
 Fish N Again Capt Dave Birch, Carolyn Birch, Bill Dawson, Tom Dawson
 Hawg Slayer Capt Geoff White, Mary Kay White
 My Way Capt Bill Anglebrandt, Jim Johnson, Dave Greshem, Brian Shiepline
 Reel Adventure Capt Steve Bruford, Greg Elliot, Dragon Stojkovic
 Southern Comfort Capt Dan Schellhaus, Bob Huber
 Uncle Bill Capt Jack McFarlane, Tom McFarlane, Matt Robb, Stan Jones, Lee Townsend, Dick Robb
 ??? Capt Jerry Rank, Judy Rank

King Salmon

17 weighed in

1st 19 lbs 2 oz Capt Dan Schellhaus, Southern Comfort
 2nd 14 lbs 7 oz Brandon Schultz, Bounty Hunter, Capt Bob Schultz
 3rd 14 lbs 4 oz Tom Dawson, Fish N Again, Capt Dave Burtch

Coho Salmon

1 weighed in

1st 5 lbs 7 oz Dragon Stojkovic, Reel Adventure, Capt Steve Bruford



Sunday, August 29, 2004

8 boats, 22 anglers, 20 fish weighed in

Boats & Crews:

Bounty Hunter Capt Bob Schultz, Brandon Schultz
 Diehard Capt Ed Matusko, Elise Matusko
 Fish Dinner Capt Steve Loehr, Jeff Loehr, Leroy Brown
 Hawg Slayer Capt Geoff White, Mary Kay White
 My Way Capt Bill Anglebrandt, Jim Johnson, Dave Greshem, Brian Shiepline
 Reel Adventure Capt Steve Bruford, Greg Elliot, Dragon Stojkovic
 Southern Comfort Capt Dan Schellhaus, Bob Huber
 Uncle Bill Capt Jack McFarlane, Matt Robb, Stan Jones, Lee Townsend

King Salmon

16 weighed in

1st 18 lbs 11 oz Capt Geoff White, Hawg Slayer
 2nd 17 lbs 4 oz Bob Huber, Southern Comfort, Capt Dan Schellhaus
 3rd 15 lbs 11 oz Leroy Brown, Fish Dinner, Capt Steve Loehr

Coho Salmon

3 weighed in

1st 5 lbs 12 oz Dragon Stojkovic, Reel Adventure, Capt Steve Bruford
 2nd 4 lbs 13 oz Capt Ed Matusko, Diehard
 3rd 3 lbs 15 oz Lee Townsend, Uncle Bill, Capt Jack McFarlane

Lake Trout

1 weighed in

1st 4 lbs 4 oz Jim Johnson, My Way, Capt Bill Anglebrandt



Fishing Plaques and Tags for 2004

The Board has ruled that all new members and members who have never received a plaque and have won 1st or 2nd place in Tournaments will receive one.

The member's list that I have is: Bill Purves Warren Newstead, Jim Johnson, Bob Schulz, Brandon Schulz, Scott Lewis and Dan Schellhase. I hope I have not missed anyone. Please contact me if I have. Guests can receive a trophy for the club cost (\$15.00) Captains please contact me if you want a plaque for one of your guest who have won a 1st or 2nd place

Tags to place on Plaques with date, fish and weight will be given to all members and guests who have won 1st or 2nd place. Any one who needs a new plaque for the tags and who does not come under the specifications listed above can buy them at Club cost (\$15.00)

All of The new plaques are 6"X8" and will have the Club Logo and the fisherpersons name on them.

Again please contact me if you have any questions

Contact Mike Odle @ 248-673-3759

Editor's Note:

Happy Holidays, I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving and now are gearing up for the holiday season. I ask that if any of you have submissions for the *Downrigger* please send them to me via e-mail at michiganbasser@yahoo.com I will be working in Microsoft word so if your submission could be in that format it would be a great help. I wish everyone a very merry holiday season.

Scott Lewis

Coupon Corner Chris Temple from the Gander Mountain, located at the Summit Place Mall in Waterford, has agreed to give a 10% discount to all OCSA members. You must present the coupon below with your OCSA membership card at the time of purchase to obtain the discount. The discount doesn't apply to firearms, electronics, gift certificates, or licenses.



2230 Mall Drive East Waterford Michigan 48328

Present this coupon from the Downrigger and your OCSA membership card at the time of purchase. The discount is good for 10% off your entire purchase (excluding firearms, ammunition, electronics, gift certificates and licenses)

Good for all active Oakland County Sport fishing Club Members at the Summit Place Mall Store

SAVE SOME MONEY!!

Just a reminder!!!!!! OCSA members can get BOAT U.S. membership for half price. BOAT U.S. regular price is \$19.00. OCSA members can pay \$9.50 by submitting our group number **GA 81183B** on the Boat U.S. application with your check. Currently, 21 of our members are taking advantage of this opportunity. Feel free to enroll for this benefit.

Pat Van Conant
Membership Chairperson

Angler's Articles

Monday, October 18, 2004



Todd McInturf / The Detroit News

Ken Koster, left, and Mike Thomas carry a cooler of perch from the Channel Cat boat to a Lansing-bound truck. DNR experts say perch fishing in Lake Michigan north of Muskegon is suffering.

As Lake Huron salmon leave, tourism suffers

Migration pattery follows food supply

By Gene Schabath / The Detroit News

An exodus of salmon from Lake Huron, chronic bad perch production in Lake Michigan and one of the worst crops of walleye ever in Lake St. Clair are adding up to a bleak season for the \$1 billion Great Lakes sport fishing industry. Big schools of one of Michigan's most prized game fish, the Chinook king salmon, have all but abandoned Lake Huron for better feeding grounds in Lake Michigan, hurting businesses and anglers while raising questions about the future of salmon fishing in the lake. DNR experts say perch fishing in Lake Michigan north of Muskegon also is suffering, and walleye fishing in Lake St. Clair is "the worst in 50 years," said Bill "Ducky" Wilkie, a Harrison Township fisherman. The situation in Lake Huron has fish biologists concerned because salmon there have had two successive bad years, and all signs point to a third straight wretched year in 2005. Sport fishing in the Great Lakes is a \$1 billion business, said Brad Wurfel, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. And the troubled salmon fishery in Lake Huron — along with other sluggish fishing in the Great Lakes — will take a chunk out of the revenue earned by charter boat captains, bait dealers and fishing equipment retailers. State officials have not yet put a price tag on this year's losses. Joel Anderson, owner of Anderson's Pro Bait Shop in Port Huron, says the dearth of salmon in Lake Huron has cut into profits that so far have been offset by fishing for other game fish and a strong ice fishing season last winter. "But if the walleye and salmon both slow down, I'm in trouble," he said. "It's something you don't almost want to talk about. It's your livelihood."

The reason for the exodus of salmon in Lake Huron is the paucity of alewives, a sardine-size fish that is their main source of food, said Dave Fiedler, fisheries research biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources office in Alpena. "In the southern portion of Lake Huron, from Port Huron to Port Austin, they (salmon) have just left," Fiedler said. Gary Gaw, a charter boat captain out of Grindstone City at the tip of Michigan's Thumb, said his salmon fishing business is down 60 percent from last year and other businesses also are feeling the loss. "When the salmon fishing is down, everything is down — marinas, motels," said Gaw, captain of boat Dea-Lynn, whose losses so far have been offset by charter trips for other fish. "And the salmon we are catching are small. We used to catch 20-pounders, but this year, if we catch a 12-pounder, that's a good size."

The reason for the steep decline in alewives is two harsh winters in a row, which led to the death of young alewives, and competition for food from invasive species such as the zebra mussel and quagga mussel, Fiedler said. The problems are worse in Lake Huron than Lake Michigan because Lake Huron is more shallow, and alewives can't hide from the cold. A third factor is unprecedented natural reproduction of Chinook salmon in Lake Huron, said James Johnson, acting manager of Michigan's fisheries research program based in Alpena. Experts aren't sure why reproduction is higher there than in Lake Michigan, but those salmon have helped deplete their source of food.

Future for salmon

Salmon were introduced into the Great Lakes 40 years ago to curtail the massive schools of alewives and other forage fish. Alewives and rainbow smelt made up 95 percent of all fish in Lake Huron back in the 1960s.

But in the last two years, the equation of record-low alewives and huge schools of salmon looking for food has resulted in deep trouble for Lake Huron's multimillion-dollar salmon fishery.

Compounding the situation are the large schools of Lake Huron lake trout that also feed on alewives. The big lake trout schools are the result of a successful program to get rid of the fish-killing lamprey eel. It all adds up to a big question mark for the future of salmon in Lake Huron.

"We don't know what the answer is," Johnson said. "If the reproduction (of salmon) continues like this, the answer is no; there won't be a comeback. But if Chinook reproduction settles down, it would give alewives a chance to come back."

Not only have the big Chinook headed to the bountiful waters of Lake Michigan, salmon that stayed behind in Lake Huron are not in the best of shape. There are still plenty of Chinook salmon in Lake Huron, but they are on the small size because of the absence of a good supply of forage food such as alewives. "They're in poor condition," Fiedler said. "The main concern is their condition and their growth rate. It's not good. It's tough to know what will happen in the future. We don't know what our options are."

"It's terrible," said Port Huron salmon fisherman Paul Zimmer. "There just is no bait fish for the salmon. There are no alewives out there." Zimmer has made about 25 salmon fishing trips this year and has caught only two or three small salmon per trip. In past years, when Lake Huron was the top producer of salmon, he would average 10 a trip and the fish would be in the 20-pound range. Johnson said few young alewives have been caught by researchers this fall and that means another scarce year for the forage fish in 2005 in Lake Huron. And that means Chinook again will be heading to Lake Michigan, Johnson said. "I never thought I would see alewives disappear in Lake Huron," Johnson said. "We never saw this coming."

Finding a solution

State fishing experts are now studying the Lake Huron situation and will come out with a report next spring about plans to deal with it. Perch fishing in most of Lake Michigan, from Muskegon north, has been in the doldrums for a decade and is not showing much improvement, said Jay Wesley, a Department of Natural Resources manager for southwest Michigan. Perch fishing in Lake Huron has also had a steep decline in recent years. "It's really been tough," Wesley said. "There are few reports of good perch fishing." Exotic species such as the zebra mussel and spiny water flea are believed to be the reason for the perch decline because they eat plankton and other food young perch need to survive.

The walleye fishing in Lake St. Clair, regarded as one of North America's best fishing lakes, was the worst in memory, say veteran fishermen. State fish biologist Mike Thomas said poor reproduction of walleye in Lake Erie — which supplies most of the walleye for Lake St. Clair — had two horrible years in 2000 and 2002. But a good hatch in 2003 means walleye fishing should be food next year, Thomas said.

But Lake Huron is a different matter. The lake remained unchanged for about 10,000 years, said Johnson, the DNR fisheries chief. But in the last few years it has been stricken with environmental upheavals that has a major impact on alewives and salmon. "It is like the perfect storm — all these things working together just came in on the alewives, and that in turn had this effect in the salmon," Johnson said.

You can reach Gene Schabath at (586) 468-3614 or gschabath@detnews.com.



Todd McInturf / The Detroit News

Department of Natural Resources workers Jeremy Maranowski, left, and Roy Beasley put Lake Michigan perch in a bucket to transport to Lansing for a health study.

Fishing issues

Changes in food supplies are altering fishing patterns in the Great Lakes, which is having an impact on Michigan's sport-fishing industry.

Bleak spots

* State officials are studying the loss of Chinook king salmon from Lake Huron, which is believed to be caused by a dearth of alewives.

* Perch fishing in Lake Michigan north of Muskegon is suffering due to increased competition for the food young perch need to survive.

* Walleye fishing in Lake St. Clair is bad because of poor reproduction of walleye in Lake Erie but is expected to rebound next year.

Bright spots

* A record number of lake trout have been reported in Lake Superior.

* Unprecedented numbers of salmon have been caught in Lake Michigan, where many Lake Huron salmon are believed to have moved in a search of food.

* Walleye and perch fishing has been the best in decades in Saginaw Bay.

* Muskellunge fishing -- with lunkers over 40 pounds in size -- in Lake St. Clair has been outstanding.

Back-Trolling For Bruiser Steelhead

Getting your lures and baits down to the fish you seek is the key to successful steelhead angling at this time of the year. Here are some expert tips to help.

By T. A. Tatterson IV



Photo by Richard T. Grost

Winter steelhead are just that: winter fish. Our rivers are already prone to assault by high, murky water as winter rains pound our shores, and now that March is upon us these waters are even more susceptible to flood conditions as spring temperatures begin to melt the snow pack. This influx of high, cold, discolored water is sure to make steelheading more difficult -- as if it weren't hard enough already! -- and anglers need to find the right presentation that will put an irritating and/or irresistible offering right in front of the biggest fish of the season.

The high and, consequently, off-color water common in coastal rivers throughout early spring creates the need for fishermen to get into a steelhead's head. Experienced anglers will study the water of each bend and pool along the way and feel for the comfort zone of the fish. Where would you be if you were one? After deciphering these questions, fish those waters slowly and thoroughly.

Back-trolling is your best bet for covering this type of water and is accomplished by slowly rowing your drift boat (or using a small "kicker" outboard on a jet sled) upstream into the current, which in effect slows the boat just enough to create tension on your fishing line. The idea is to put your lure or bait in the deepest holes, and therefore the most productive water, for as long as possible during one or more swings through a drift.

There are several variations of back-trolling now practiced across the West. The first is traditional back-trolling with a diving plug as described above. Then there is back-bouncing, which involves bouncing a bobber and/or bait across the bottom as the boater moves, or "slips," slowly downstream. Finally, there is side-planing, which is becoming a popular way for shorebound anglers to work plugs or bait through deep pockets and pools much like their boating brothers.

The big advantage of using a non-weighted plug for back-trolling is that the lure will naturally follow the river currents, guiding it around snags and rocks while still maintaining a position near the bottom. The list of makes and models is vast and varied, and it is usually most effective to ask around at local bait and tackle shops to find out what is working locally.

Bobbers and bait (roe, sand shrimp, etc.) have become the offerings of choice amongst back-bouncers, although the method originated with plug-anglers; again, you'll find a large array of offerings that often fill an entire aisle in the tackle shop. Half-and-half color patterns, spotted patterns and rainbow blends are typically good producers of winter steelhead. Most steelheaders fish Corkys with a strand or two of soft yarn in the leader's bumper or egg loop.

Regardless of your exact tactics, there are several things to consider when targeting these big fish. I asked steelhead fishing guide Dan "Rooster" Leavens for his Top 10 list of advice. Here are his recommendations for those who would troll using plugs:

No. 1 - Tune your plugs. Manufacturers usually print on the carton how to get your new plug to swim in fast current. A straight-running plug will dive deeper and have a consistent irritating wobble that steelies hate. ("hate" being a good term). As a general rule, if your plug is rolling to the right, you torque the eye to the right. I always say that if you feel the eye move, you have moved it too far. Keep a pair of small needle-nosed pliers in your plug box; the worst thing you can try is to bend the line eye with your teeth.

No. 2 - Learn how to read the water. Each river will have certain slots where steelies consistently lie. A trip with a guide is the fastest way to learn these haunts, and if you don't have the opportunity to float a river two or three times in a season (different water levels change these haunts drastically), a person should really consider a guided trip. Not only will you learn the river and its secrets, but you will also discover, as I have found, that each river favors one plug or another. One may not work on your home waters but may do very well down the way, and vice versa. Guides are in tune with the types and colors that have been taking fish on a regular basis. As a general rule, metalheads like to hold in tailouts, especially in the early morning hours, when they are still traveling. Don't forget about rocks and concentrating on the upstream side of big boulders. Don't get too upset when your plugs won't hang in the boil on the downstream side; try it anyway.

No. 3 - Have two (or three) rods rigged. Pre-rigged rods, some with plugs, others with drift gear, will cut down on the time spent changing gear. On the same note, a good combination of plug-pulling line and a limber, slow-action plug rod is not your ideal setup for tossing bait. Last year I started running new Spectra line, and I am real happy with the results; although it's less forgiving on strikes - which can be a good thing at times -- the smaller diameter lets my plugs dive deeper. Having pre-rigged rods lets you be ready to put out a different offering on a moment's notice. How many times have you drifted through an OK spot with roe and the guy behind you nails a fish on a plug?

No. 4 - Check your plug's distance in front of the boat. You can bring this topic up with any steelheader and talk till you are both blue in the face. As a general rule, 50 feet is a good starting point, but so many factors contribute to a winning combo, it's tough to say what is perfect. As a general guideline, you'll need to shorten your lead for shallow, fast tail-outs. For deep, slow runs along cut banks and riprap, get your plugs out 50 to 60 feet. Leavens constantly adjusts lengths while his plugs are doing their thing. You want your plug to run from 6 to 12 inches above the bottom as much of the time as possible, but the only way to know you're there for sure is to let it hit the gravel every now and then. The bottom line is to experiment; don't be afraid to try unorthodox things.

No. 5 - Pick a color. Here's another topic for lung-clearing conversation! At least there are some general guidelines: In clear waters, stick with neutral colors like darker shades of blue, green and pink. Metallic schemes are my favorite but you may need to experiment with black and other dark shades, which can be real sleepers. In dirty water, get out the biggest, nastiest plugs in your box. Leavens starts with bright orange, red and all white. No. 6 - Boat handling. Just putting out the plugs and backpedaling only make up about 10 percent of what you need to know and do for success. Remember what I said about the guide? Some slots are conducive to sweeping side to side, and others are best run as straight as possible. Every hole is a bit different. Rowing techniques vary from person to person. You can stagger your strokes, which will in turn stagger the digging/diving action of each plug, or you can simultaneously stroke both paddles evenly to keep them the plugs working the same. Again, you'll need to experiment to find what works.

No. 7 - Scents. Depending on the river and the current regulations, you may be able to use manufactured scent. I do. I like shrimp-based scents and will fall back on the old standby anise oil when fishing is really slow. There are about a million different types of scent out there. What you use and how often is entirely of personal preference.

No. 8 - Sharpen your hooks. I don't care if you like trebles or single Siwash hooks. If the points on your hooks aren't razor sharp, you are going to lose fish. Leavens sharpens his hooks every time I put it out. No. 9 - Rod position. You are trying to get that plug down to the bottom, right? Do the same thing with your rod holders: Keep them at the angle necessary (dictated by water conditions) to achieve this.

No. 10 - Watch your buddies. If your fishing partner says, "Well, this is what I do. . . ." then try that too, if he's catching fish. All bets are off when you are trying to put fish in the boat.



165 COUNTRYSIDE LN
HIGHLAND MI 48357

Season's Greetings
And
Happy New Year

Calendar or Upcoming events

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|-----------------------------|---|
| December 8 th | Board Meeting/Pizza at Geno's in Keego Harbor 7pm |
| December 11 | Christmas Party at the Newstead's home Contact Marti Newstead to RSVP |
| January 5 th | Board Meeting at DPNC 7:00 pm |
| January 12 | Membership Meeting at DPNS 7:30 pm |
| January 13-16 th | Novi Expo Center Fishing Show |