



Walleye Technical Committee

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2010 Summer Business Meeting Minutes

WTC-ETC-CTC Joint Meeting, Stoney Creek Inn, Onalaska, WI July 27-29, 2010

Chair VanDeHey called the meeting to order at 9:20 AM on Thursday, July 29, 2010. Minutes from the 2009 winter meeting were reviewed and it was recommended that they be corrected to reflect the name change of the synopsis from "Biology and Management of Walleye and Sauger" to the voted on and accepted name of "Biology, Management and Culture of Walleye and Sauger". There were no other changes noted, motion was made and carried to accept the 2009 Winter Business Meeting Minutes as so modified.

Sander Travel Award:

Discussion was initiated about the timing of the deadline for the Sander travel award, which was changed at the 2009 summer meeting from August 31 to September 30th to more closely reflect student's return from summer holiday. Chair VanDeHey expressed concern that we are not receiving enough applications and asked for suggestions on how to improve this situation. The application process itself is fairly simple, requiring only a one-page letter describing the student's project and how it relates to walleye biology, culture, or management. Making a presentation at the Midwest is also a good reason for requesting the award. Chair VanDeHey suggested that perhaps more advertising would be effective, and a notice could be sent to university departments, student sub-units, and statewide list serves. Some discussion ensued about whether or not there should be restrictions based on the availability of alternative funding but this was not considered necessary. Chair VanDeHey will check into making this award information more available to students.

State and Provincial Reports:

Michigan, Patrick Hanchin:

Walleye rearing/stocking continues at approximately 1/3 of pre-VHS levels and will likely not change until disinfection techniques are confirmed. We are mainly stocking walleyes in isolated lakes, or lakes with immediate connection to the Great Lakes. Walleye are not being stocked in the Lake Superior drainage, though we are planning on initiating a brood source for that drainage (Portage-Torch lake system). A lawsuit is ongoing by a commercial fisherman for the right to harvest walleyes in Saginaw Bay.

Wisconsin, Steve Gilbert:

1. The issue of walleye – bass interactions has been a major issue in the state in the last year. There are biologists that say that once naturally recruiting walleye waters are now being taken over by bass. They feel that once high density bass fisheries become established in these waters that walleye stocking success is affected. In 2010, regulations were passed on 21 lakes in the northwestern part of the state to increase bass harvest and reduce walleye harvest on these waters. The regulations passed resulted in no minimum size limit on bass (was 14") and raising the size limit on walleye to 18" (was 15") and lowering the bag to 3 fish (was 5).

On the other side there are biologists who feel that walleye are suppressing bass populations. This is an issue on waters with high natural walleye recruitment. There is evidence that shows that on some bass/panfish waters where walleye were introduced that once they started pulling off natural year classes bass numbers declined.

There is a recent article (June 2010) in the Wisconsin Natural resources magazine that does a fairly good job of presenting this issue. The title is sustaining a fishery or fighting natural change? and can be found on line at: dnr.wi.gov/wnrsmag/2010/06/fishery.htm

2. There is a proposal to change the baseline walleye regulation in the southern two thirds of the state from a 15" minimum and 5 bag to an 18" minimum and 3 bag. This has been proposed due to faster growth rates in this region, the presence of mostly stocked fisheries, and to improve the potential for natural recruitment. The main debate at this point is where to draw the north south line and how to exempt waters.
3. A new WDNR research report (#190) came out in March of this year and evaluates the 14 to 18 inch protected walleye slot on several waters in the state. The title is oddly enough An Evaluation of the efficacy of a 14 to 18 inch slot size limit in Northern Wisconsin and can be found on line at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/publications/PUB-SS-590-2010.pdf> It has some issues with it and will eventually make it to a journal once these items are addressed.
4. The state is also evaluating issues related to survival of stocked walleye at various sizes and stocking rates. This is an issue most states in our region are wrestling with. Size vs. production capacity vs. cost vs. survival is the debated issues as usual. It is unclear how this will shake out at this time.

Minnesota, Dale Logsdon:

VHS testing continues. Pete Jacobsen is constructing a curve to be used as a tool for stocking rates based on differential survival by size of fish stocked. This is especially important as the product received from hatcheries is not universal and flexibility is needed. Some managers are trying to make correlations with lake types as some systems need larger fish for adequate survival.

OTC marking has become a challenge as production of the drug used was discontinued. However, the AADAP office in Bozeman MT came up with a suitable substitute to be used under INAD exemption. Four large lakes are primarily used for egg-take and these are re-stocked with fry at 10%. However, either survival or hatch rates are less than 1% so it is felt that this stocking rate needs re-evaluation.

The state sales tax increase known as the **Clean Water, Wildlife, Cultural Heritage and Natural Areas Amendment**. was passed. It increased the sales tax throughout the state by three-eighths of one percent. That tax increase will amount to about \$300 million a year of new revenue for the state government. The measure was a legislative referral placed on the ballot by the Minnesota State Legislature. Money raised through the new tax is dedicated to pay for natural resource protection and cultural heritage programs. The tax dollars raised through the increase is distributed according to the following formula: 33 percent to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife; 33 percent to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation (at least five percent of the this amount must be spent only to protect drinking water sources); 14.25 percent to support the state's parks and trails; and 19.75 percent for the arts and cultural heritage purposes. The DNR needs to direct dollars to specific projects and must compete with private entities for grant monies.

On-going studies:

Some state slot limits have been in place long enough to gather information that can be evaluated. There are some indications that there have been recruitment reductions.

Leech Lake has been having cormorant issues and has legislative mandated walleye stocking. This is to be at the rate of 1,000 fry per acre every other year, and fry must be OTC-marked. Wild fry abundance can then be evaluated in off years.

The "fryling" stocking study is being evaluated as ethanol production and increased development of duck habitat are claiming natural ponds used for walleye culture.

Red Lake is in recovery. Native Americans own three-fourths of the shoreline and are ramping up their commercial fishery. They are currently staying below safe harvest level as public opinion of gillnetting is that it kills fish. However, hook and line capture is not reported.

Kansas, Andy Jansen:

Kansas is undertaking an age and growth/recruitment project based on a paper recently published online by Mike Quist et al. regarding how supplemental stocking affects recruitment and overfishing:

Exploitation of walleye in a Great Plains reservoir: harvest patterns and management scenarios

M. C. QUIST, J. L. STEPHEN, S. T. LYNOTT, J. M. GOECKLER, R. D. SCHULTZ

Published Online: Jun 14 2010 10:03AM

DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2400.2010.00752.x

Fisheries Management and Ecology

Kansas currently has nine lakes with known infestations of zebra mussels and there are filtered water protocols to be followed and genetic testing to be done when taking walleye eggs.

South Dakota, Justin VanDeHey and Megan Thul:

Megan reports that there are many research projects going on, but the primary one is her current master's program evaluating two lakes. One lake has stable recruitment and the other does not. The poor recruitment lake has a population of freshwater drum and it is suspected that there may be diet overlap and competition between young drum and young walleye. Megan is doing some stable isotope evaluation of many sizes, and based on some research done by Flammang et. al. she is looking at food availability, water quality issues, and differential productivity. Dr. Casey Schoenebeck commented that he found freshwater drum to consume cladocerans, which are also a preferred food of young walleye.

Justin reported that feeding interactions between smallmouth bass and walleye had been reported in Melissa Wuellner's dissertation but they were finding that these were most likely system specific and not widespread. However, there was not a lot of good information for comparison as CPUE data for bass was limited until recent years. There are some lakes that have very good smallmouth populations which increases diversity, but there are conflicts between walleye anglers who are smallmouth haters and consider them to be trash fish. Others are concerned that smallmouth are consuming too many yellow perch and depriving walleye of this forage. A research project will begin in 2011 to assess yellow perch/smallmouth bass interactions. Long-term datasets indicate that there is a relationship between Age-0 walleye abundance and larval yellow perch abundance across multiple systems and that simple systems have strong yellow perch/walleye associations. The state is increasing its OTC marking of walleye and yellow perch.

Washington, Bruce Bolding:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will be in its ninth year of FWIN (Fall Walleye Index Netting) sampling this fall. The sampling has been the most important improvement in walleye management since walleye were first identified in Washington in 1960. The sampling gives biologists and managers an immediate and accurate picture of population status at the time of sampling, along with comparative and trend values from previous years. The sampling has also resulted in improved regulations on most of the waters we survey.

Walleye continue to be an immensely popular fishery in the eastern part of the state and the lower Columbia River. It plays the role of both trophy and harvest fishery to the delight of many anglers. The state record of 19 lbs. 5 oz, caught in 2007 still stands although many feel that record could be shattered at any time.

Although walleye in Washington have many thousands of loyal followers, they also have their detractors. Native fish advocates point the finger at walleye and implicate them as having significant negative impacts on outmigrating salmon and steelhead smolts in the main stem of the Columbia River, even though diet studies don't particularly support that viewpoint. A new study in the lower Columbia will once again look at walleye diet and hopefully will help resolve the contentious issue of warmwater fish management in that area. A possible outcome in the future could be a loosening of sport regulations.

Iowa, Donna Muhm:

Iowa is beginning to evaluate cost-effectiveness of producing advanced fingerling walleye based on their survival, and the evaluation of walleye loss at reservoirs, specifically Rathbun Reservoir.

Financial Report: Donna Hanen Muhm

| | INCOME | EXPENSES | BALANCE |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance, November 1, 2009 | | | \$24,111.48 |
| Monthly Interest November 2009 Through July 2010 | \$147.86 | | |
| Synopsis Donations | Texas \$250.00 | | |
| Ending Balance as of July 1, 2010 | | | \$24,509.36 |

Note: Jason Goeckler is the new Secretary/Treasurer of the NCD, replacing Randy Schultz. His email address is jason.goeckler@ksoutdoors.com

Walleye Synopsis Update, Patrick Hanchin, Steering Committee Chair:

Patrick explained a little history about the synopsis, stating that a book re-write of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N.: Colby, P.J., R. E. McNicol, and R.A. Ryder. 1979, Synopsis of biological data on the walleye had been talked about for nearly twelve years until it was decided to get serious about it and appoint a steering committee and hire a managing editor. That was done and a deadline of December 2010 was set for manuscript completion. To date, six of the 12 chapters are complete and it is hoped that the remainder will be completed by September. Once the manuscript is finished it can be published in approximately three months. Since then the name was changed to create more interest and a cover was selected and voted upon. Our original goal was to contribute one-half of the production costs or approximately \$15,000, and to pay the editor \$20,000. As of now we are around \$5,000 short of that goal. Bruce has been paid \$10,000 thus far but has offered to return \$5,000. General consensus is that we do not want him to return any monies. The publisher states that the book will still be published whether we are short of funds or not, but profit sharing may not be an option. It was never our goal to reap a profit but this may need to be evaluated as our funding sources have pretty much dried up. We have not received any funds from Walleyes for Tomorrow and the FWS did not produce the \$5,000 they promised. Steve Gilbert stated that he would check with other funding sources to see what he can come up with, and that the past year was much better for the federal government than the previous year. This could mean funds may yet be forthcoming from this source.

Patrick submitted the following information after the meeting:

I thought I'd keep you apprised of my recent discussion with Aaron Lerner from the AFS Books Department regarding funding for the book. I told Aaron our situation of being around \$5,000 short of our share of the production cost. We were supposed to come up with \$15K for 1/2 or production, plus the \$20K for the contract with Bruce. Given that we have raised \$30K (contributions plus interest derived from having lots of money in the bank), we are \$5K short. Aaron assured me that we don't need to worry about it, and that AFS will still publish the book, but that profit sharing would likely not occur.

When I originally submitted the proposal for an AFS book, we briefly discussed profit sharing, but Aaron said that it depended on numerous things and that nothing is usually set in stone at that stage. Profit sharing for AFS books only occurs after the production cost is recovered, and it generally only occurs when the proposing group contributes at least 2/3 of the production cost. Aaron envisioned that AFS would have to sell thousands of the book in order to recover \$20,000, and even if we get \$5K from the last few contribution requests and pay our 1/2 of production, we would still probably not have any profit sharing. However, in discussions at past WTC meetings, we agreed that the production of the book was the goal, and that revenue was not the intent.

I just wanted you all to know what is going on with the book project. Ultimately, we will have helped to produce a major contribution to the management of walleye and sauger, but it may not result in any fat bank account for the WTC. This is generally how we deal with summer meetings/workshops as well (no intent to raise \$).

New Business:

There will be a coolwater fishes symposium at the Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference in December. The deadline for paper submission has been extended, but everyone needs to get them in as soon as possible. There are volunteer opportunities to moderate if you need a justification for out of state travel. Some interest has been expressed regarding publishing the papers as a special issue in a journal but unless there is more interest shown this may not happen. Guest editors would be needed if this comes to fruition.

The International Pike Symposium from Lake Placid has been published and copies can be obtained from Rod Pierce for \$30.00. Rod's email address is: rod.pierce@dnr.state.mn.us

The winter business meeting will be held the Sunday afternoon before the 2010 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference begins as room reservations were required prior to our summer meeting.

Some talk has been circulated about changing our name to the Percid Technical Committee since we deal a lot with perch and sauger as well as walleye. If this is something you would like to see happen, please let the chair know your opinion. If enough interest is shown, he will find out how this change would be implemented.

Volunteers are needed to become Chair-elect, whose term runs from December to December. Please let either Justin VanDeHey, Andy Jansen, or Donna Muhm know of your interest.

Discussion ensued about a theme and location for the 2011 summer meeting. Several possibilities were suggested, such as La Crosse, Dubuque, Iowa, and the Quad Cities. It was decided that the theme should be tagging, so talks regarding mark and recapture or tagging studies will be solicited. Additionally, the possibility of holding a tagging, mark-recapture workshop in conjunction with the 2011 summer meeting was discussed. Andy Jansen and Justin VanDeHey will look into logistics and potential speakers for either a workshop or special session during the meeting. Another resource may be representatives of tag companies. Megan Thul volunteered to help Chair-elect Jansen with arrangements.

A motion was made for adjournment, seconded, and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Hanen Muhm
Secretary, Walleye Technical Committee