



Walleye Technical Committee

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2013 Summer Business Meeting Minutes

WTC-ETC-CTC Joint Meeting, Stoney Creek Lodge, Wausau WI July 23-25, 2013

Minutes

The North Central Division Walleye Technical Committee (WTC) met during July 23rd-25th in Wausau, Wisconsin. The meeting was once again held in conjunction with the Centrarchid (CTC) and Esocid Technical Committees (ETC). More than 40 people attended the joint meeting and we had many excellent presentations provided by both students and professionals. The business meeting for the WTC was held and included updates from most states in the NCD, several of which appear below. We elected to hold the **2014 WTC meeting in LaCrosse, WI, on July 22-24**. The meeting will once again be held in conjunction with the CTC and the ETC. Hilary Meyer (South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks) has volunteered to serve as the next chair of the WTC and will assume this role at the next WTC business meeting to be held at the 74th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference to be held in Kansas City January 26th-29th 2014.

Financial Report

WALLEYE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT June 1, 2013

	INCOME	EXPENSES	BALANCE
Beginning Balance, October 31, 2012			\$13,707.32
Sander Award December		\$100.00	
Plaque		\$50.00	
Year to date interest (as of June 2013)	\$35.16		
Balance			\$13,592.48

Statewide updates

North Dakota

Provided by Todd Caspers (NGFD)

- The “good old days” of walleye fishing in North Dakota are right now.
- There are currently 146 waters in the state with walleye populations.

- Many of our new walleye populations reside in waters that were formerly slough-type habitats but have become lakes capable of supporting fish populations during the recent wet cycle.
- 11 million walleye fingerlings were stocked in 110 North Dakota water bodies this year. This is a new record for the number of fingerlings stocked in the state in a single year.
- The walleye population in Devils Lake is doing well. Walleye are currently at high abundance and many of these fish are 12-17 inches long, with larger and smaller fish as well. Natural reproduction has been very good in recent years and walleye were not stocked in Devils Lake this year.
- The Lake Oahe and Missouri River walleye populations declined in abundance, size structure, and condition due to forage problems caused by the 2011 flood.

Michigan

Provided by Cory Kovacs (MIDNR)

- Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians (LTBB) is in the process of completing their hatchery which includes 2 small lined ponds, potentially allowing them to rear walleye as soon as 2014. The hatchery also has capabilities for rearing sturgeon fry. The LTBB worked with UWSP demonstration hatchery in designing it.
- Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians did not stock any inland waters due to the poor harvest of their large pond (typically yields about 1 million spring fingerlings); total harvest from that pond was about 65,000.
- Thompson State Fish Hatchery-MDNR-Bay de Noc strain-Egg take occurred late April (latest on record). Took 14.7 million eggs and transferred about 2 million to CORA for cooperative rearing programs. Eggs in hatchery after 3-4 days had 70% mortality (possible disinfection issues). They then received about 1 million fry back from CORA to be moved to 3 Management Unit (MU) ponds. Hatchery ended up hatching 3.4 million fry. OTC marked fry in bags with increased amounts of DO and 3x the amount of buffer to adjust pH. Overall, hatchery learned fry took a tremendous amount of DO and DO needed to be boosted to >140% saturation for the 6 hour marking period. An attempt to OTC mark spring fingerlings failed in July. The limiting factor is believed to be the additional amount of handling stress prior to the marking process. Contact: Jan Vanamberg, MDNR
- Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery-MDNR-Muskegon River-Egg take occurred in early April per usual. 50.3 million eggs were taken and transferred to Wolf Lake Hatchery. Fertility in 2013 was about 48% compared with 60-70% in previous years; reasons unknown. Fry produced was 12.5 million with 8.5 million fry being released to rearing ponds. Issues with OTC marking resulted in only about ½ of the fry being marked. The remaining fry were unmarked and shipped to rearing ponds. Trials to determine marking issues were conducted and found neither OTC nor the amount of buffer affected fry condition, and pH levels did not affect fry condition. However, DO was the limiting factor in marking fry successfully with limited mortality. Contact: Martha Wolgamood.

MDNR Management Unit Rearing Pond Summaries:

- Northern Lake Michigan MU: harvested 8 ponds with a total of 564,539 spring fingerlings
- Western Lake Superior MU: harvested 1 pond with a total of 9,581 spring fingerlings; return for the pond was 10%
- Central Lake Michigan MU: harvested 3 ponds with a total of 521,382 spring fingerlings; returns for the 3 ponds were 84%, 35%, and 14%
- Southern Lake Michigan MU: harvested 5 ponds with a total of 450,333 spring fingerlings; stocked 18 waters with across Michigan
- Eastern Lake Superior MU: harvested 1 pond with a total of 10,204 spring fingerlings; return for the pond was 8%; 4,800 spring fingerlings were moved for growing to advanced fingerlings
- *Results not obtained from the following MU's: Lake Erie, Northern Lake Huron, Southern Lake Huron*

Inland Waterway Walleye Tagging Project conducted by MDNR, Tribes, MSU

- *Details of work accomplished and results:* Waters included in the study are Crooked Lake, Crooked River, Burt Lake, Pickerel Lake, Indian River, Mullet Lake, Cheboygen River, and Black River; study quantifies movement dynamics of walleye within the waterway, diet analyses, and how invasive species, such as round goby and alewife are being integrated into the native food web; Collectively have tagged >10,000 walleye in the system during the 3 year study; anglers have assisted in tagging fish and collecting stomachs; preliminary results show walleye heavily utilizing round goby as prey item (fall season), also low larval walleye densities may be linked to low overall zooplankton densities and in particular low densities of large bodied zooplankton within the waterway, and there has been substantial movement of walleye between the lakes based on tag returns. Additional analysis for the project is yet to be completed. Contact for the project is Tim Cwalinski, MDNR or Seth Herbst, MSU.

Lake Huron-Walleye Update (MDNR, USGS, GLFC, Clarkson Univ., and OHDNR)

- Walleye reached recovery targets in Saginaw Bay in 2009 and have remained at high abundance. Stocking was discontinued in 2006. Recovery is attributed to the disappearance of alewives in Lake Huron. Estimated stock for Saginaw Bay is presently about 3.5 million age 2+ walleyes. Currently, there is a walleye movement study being conducted with use of telemetry focusing on movement of fish in and out of Saginaw Bay. 300 fish implanted with transmitters and 144 hydrophone receivers deployed around the lake and across the mouth of the bay. Preliminary results show about 50% of adults will out-migrate from the bay to the main basin (Lake Huron) from about June and spend entire summer there till fall. Some fish found in the Straits of Mackinac and Port Huron area (about 250 miles apart). This study has made managers aware of the exploitation of these fish across the lake and not just recreational. This poses a lot of challenges to the management of these walleye and may need a different approach similar to that of how salmonids are managed. Making more use of the GLFC interagency structure similar to the Lake Erie approach may be a model. Contact for the project is Dave Fielder, MDNR.

Bays de Noc Study (MDNR)

- MDNR is conducting a long term study to determine the contributions of hatchery-reared walleye in bays de Noc and how management strategies may be affected. This project has been ongoing since 2004. OTC marked walleye have been used as part of this study. Preliminary results show that in Little Bay de Noc 76% of the juvenile walleye surveyed were wild. In Big Bay de Noc it was found that 62% were wild fish. No public press releases have been made of these preliminary results to date. Contact for the project is Troy Zorn, MDNR.

St. Joseph River Study (MDNR)

- Southern Lake Michigan Management Unit is assessing the contribution of stocked fish to the walleye population in the St. Joseph River located in southwest Michigan. Stocked fish (2005-2011) were marked with OTC and have been sampled with electrofishing gear at six stations along the river. Preliminary results show that stocked walleye contributed during 2005-2011 approximately 30% to the population (14 of 47 fish caught were marked). Further analysis and summarizing will take place in 2013 with a technical report to follow. Contact for the project is Brian Gunderman, MDNR.

Minnesota

Provided by Dale Logsdon (MNDNR)

- VHS testing continues with no occurrences of the disease detected
- 2012 stocking numbers:
 - a. 232,968,521 fry
 - b. 240,564 small fingerlings
 - c. 29,522 lbs (approx. 596,344 fish) large fingerlings

- d. 50,464 lbs (approx. 302,784) yearlings
 - e. 8,127 adults
- Stocking trends: Minnesota has been evaluating the use of more fry and small fingerlings to mitigate for the loss of large natural ponds traditionally used to grow fall fingerlings. This includes “contingency stocking” where fry are stocked in the spring with the understanding that additional fingerlings will be stocked in the fall if electrofishing indicates poor survival of fry. The private aquaculture industry in Minnesota, however, continues to lobby for increased stocking of fall fingerlings because this is the product that they would like to sell to the State.
- Research: Minnesota DNR is currently conducting two research projects to evaluate walleye stocking. The first is an evaluation of opportunities and success of fryling (June harvested fingerlings) stocking across the state and the second is an evaluation of the policy of returning 10% of the egg take back into the egg-source lakes as fry.
- Bird depredation
 - a. Cormorants: Cormorant culling continues on Leech Lake and has been initiated on Lake Vermilion to reduce high localized predation on walleyes and yellow perch. The culling process includes shooting a specified percentage of nesting adults and oiling eggs to prevent hatching.
 - b. Pelicans: Large numbers of pelicans from the Lake of the Woods colony have keyed in on the walleye spawning run in the Tamarack River (tributary to Red Lake) as a foraging stopover during their spring migration back to Lake of the Woods. Bemidji State University has initiated a research study to determine the impact on the Red Lake walleye population.
- Bass/walleye interactions: The University of Minnesota has initiated a study on using spring angling to induce nesting failure in smallmouth bass populations as a method to reduce interspecific competition with walleyes.
- Mille Lacs: Managers continue struggling to understand the implications of a harvest heavily skewed towards male fish, spiny water flea induced changes to the zooplankton community, and possible zebra mussel induced changes to water transparency on walleye recruitment in Mille Lacs.

Missouri

Provided by Tory Mason (MDC)

Stocking

- Lost Valley Hatchery (Randy Terrell): Broodstock collection below Truman Dam resulted in collection of 231 females and 265 males. Those fish resulted in 18,730,000 eggs collected, of which 7,431,000 hatched (a 40% hatch rate). At Lost Valley 20 acre ponds were stocked with 125,000 fry, and 4 acre ponds were stocked with 75,000 fry; the 2,800,000 fry needed were produced. Surplus fry (4,631,000) were stocked into Lake of the Ozarks. Harvest of ponds starting May 20th resulted in 1-2" fingerlings which were stocked as follows: Lake of the Ozarks (354,000), Stockton Lake (300,000), Jacomo (20,000), and Longview (19,000). Surplus fingerlings were stocked as follows: Table Rock (96,000), Truman (185,000), Pomme de Terre (52,000), and Salt Fork (63,000).
- Northeast MO (Mike Anderson): Forest Lake large fingerling stocking evaluation completed. 6-8" stockings have resulted in a good and improving walleye fishery. Interest from anglers is way up, and plans to continue stocking in the future. No natural recruitment.
- Kansas City (Jake Allman): Stocking evaluation at Longview Lake (20/acre) with annual stockings- getting good results.
- Bull Shoals and Norfolk (AJ Pratt): 352,000 fingerlings stocked into Bull Shoals; 220,000 stocked into Norfolk.