

LAKE MICHIGAN COMMERCIAL FISHING BOARD
MEETING

February 2, 2025

Hybrid Meeting of in-person and video

1. Organizational Matters:

2. Call to Order:

Chairman Charlie Henriksen called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. Charlie mentioned that we were going to take several items out of order on the agenda.

Members Present: Charlie Henriksen, Mark Maricque, Mike LeClair (on phone), Todd Stuth, Brett Schwarz, Dan Pawlitzke, Rick Johnson.

Member Absent: None

DNR Staff Present: Miranda Westphal, Brad Eggold, Nick Leger, Tamie Paoli, Ryan Propson, Robert Stroess.

Other Attendees Present: Will Henriksen, Jerome Donohue, Dennis Hickey, Chris Peterson, Sandra Wincek, Keith Pamperin, Kevin?, Paul Smith, Jack Tong, Carin Stuth.

3. Board member position elections:

Charlie Henriksen stated that he will not run for Chairman of the LMCFB and mentioned that the LMCFB needs younger members, possibly his son Will Henriksen would be willing to serve on the LMCFB. Listed below is a demographic chart of the LMCFB.

Name	Start Year	Active Fisher	SOUTH Green Bay	North GB & LM	Active Whole-saler	State Citizen	Board Role
Rick Johnson	1985	Y		Y			
Mark Maricque	1993	Y	Y				
Mike LeClair	1989	Y		Y			
Dan Pawlitzke	1998					Y	
Charlie Henriksen	1996	Y		Y			Chair
Todd Stuth	2018	Y	Y				Vice-Chair
Brett Schwarz	2018				Y		Secretary

Membership Requirements

1 State Citizen

5 active commercial fishers (2 from southern GB & 3 from Northern GB & LM)

1 licensed active wholesaler

Chairman: Rick Johnson made a motion to elect Todd Stuth as Chairman, seconded by Brett Schwarz. All Aye. Motion passed.

Vice Chairman: Todd Stuth made a motion to elect Rick Johnson as Vice Chairman, seconded by Brett Schwarz. All Aye. Motion passed.

Secretary: Mark Maricque made a motion to elect Dan Pawlitzke as Secretary, seconded by Todd Stuth. All Aye. Motion passed.

4. Approval of the Agenda; Todd Stuth seconded by Rick Johnson, All Aye.

5. Approval of minutes of October 7, 2024; Motion made by Todd Stuth, seconded by Rick Johnson, All Aye.

6. Discussion Items:

A. 2024 Commercial harvest summary: Miranda Westphal , DNR presented the Quota and Harvest in the 3 zones, plus 2 other charts pertaining to Quota/Harvest. Also listed herein is the Lake Trout Scope Statement:

2024 Lake Michigan Commercial Harvest

<u>Water-body</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Species Name</u>	<u>Quota (Lbs)</u>	<u>2024 Harvest (Lbs)</u>	<u>Prop Har-vested</u>
GB	1	Lake Whitefish	776,647	631,550	81.30%
GB	2	Lake Whitefish	365,887	169,616	46.40%
LM	2	Lake Whitefish	522,898	67,938	13.00%
LM	1	Menominee Whitefish	1,000		
LM	2	Menominee Whitefish	46,000	53	0.10%
LM	3	Menominee Whitefish	28,000		0.00%
LM	1	Yellow Perch	0		
GB	1	Yellow Perch	100,000	51,519	51.50%
GB	2	Yellow Perch	4,655		0.00%
LM	2	Yellow Perch	0		
LM	3	Yellow Perch	0		
LM	2	Chubs	600,000		0.00%
LM	3	Chubs	300,000		0.00%
LM	3	Chubs	2,700,000	6,332	0.20%
GB	1	Rainbow Smelt	17,984		0.00%
GB	1	Rainbow Smelt	7,016		0.00%
LM	3	Rainbow Smelt	987,083		0.00%
LM	3	Rainbow Smelt	12,917	1,259	9.70%

<u>Area</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Lbs</u>	<u>Dr Lbs</u>	<u>Dr Lbs</u>	<u>Lbs</u>	<u>Dr Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>
GB	4,961			801,166				10	52	1,250	51,519
LM	6,529	22	6,332	148,672	334	53	2	1,259			
Total	11,490	22	6,332	949,837	334	53	2	1,269	52	1,250	51,519

		Bur- bot	Chub Eggs Only	Chubs	Lake White- fish	Lake White- fish Eggs Only	Me- nomi- nee White- fish	Other Species	Rain- bow Smelt	White Bass	White Perch	Yellow Perch
<u>Area</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Lbs</u>	<u>Dr Lbs</u>	<u>Dr Lbs</u>	<u>Lbs</u>	<u>Dr Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>	<u>Rd Lbs</u>
GB	1	986			631,550				10	52	1,250	51,519
GB	2	3,976			169,616							
LM	2	1,549			67,938	334	53	2				
LM	3	4,980	22	6,332	80,734				1,259			
Total		11,490	22	6,332	949,837	334	53	2	1,269	52	1,250	51,519

<u>License</u>	Burbot <u>Rd Lbs</u>	Chub Eggs Only <u>Lbs</u>	Chubs <u>Dr Lbs</u>	Lake Whitefish <u>Dr Lbs</u>	Lake White- fish Eggs Only <u>Lbs</u>	Menomi- nee Whitefish <u>Dr Lbs</u>	Other Species <u>Rd Lbs</u>	Rainbow Smelt <u>Rd Lbs</u>	White Bass <u>Rd Lbs</u>	White Perch <u>Rd Lbs</u>	Yellow Perch <u>Rd Lbs</u>
30											
31				25							160
36				0							7,742
37				478							79
43				1,513							2,036
48	4,849			8,318							
85				70,567				1,259			
94	209									210	8,292
98				300,310						162	
102	492	22	6,139								
165				8,702	334	53					
176	121										70
184				10,167							
210	3,432										3,690
242				10,723			2				
284	20			194,541							
305	10			35,749				10			
395				4,231							
427			193								
1286				9,169						105	13,479
2002	2,213			28,070					52	261	6,553
2006				241,170							
2007				2,159							
Total	11,345			<u>23,945</u>						<u>512</u>	<u>9,418</u>
		22	6,332	949,837	334	53	2	1,269	52	1,250	51,519

B. Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board (LMCFB) priority list discussion:

The Lake Trout Scope Statement is out with a public hearing scheduled for February 13, 2025, via Zoom Meeting. Discussion centered around the specificity of the Lake Trout Statement, of the DNR placing policy into the Scope Statement, whereas the LMCFB was understanding that Scope Statements be general in format and not contain specific policy information within the Scope Statement.

Listed below is the Hearing Information for the Lake Trout Scope Statement:

The Natural Resources Board approved the preliminary public hearing on the Statement of Scope SS114-24 related to establishing a Lake Michigan lake trout commercial harvest. Below is the notice and the details for attending or submitting public comments during the preliminary public hearing process.

Notice of Preliminary Hearing on Statement of Scope

The Department of Natural Resources announces that it will hold a preliminary public hearing on Statement of Scope SS 114-24 which affects ch. NR 20 and 25 and is related to the establishing a Lake Michigan lake trout commercial harvest, at the time and place shown below.

Hearing Information

Date: February 13, 2025

Time: 3:00 pm

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Join the meeting now](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 608-571-2209,, 549237384#](#) United States, Madison

Phone conference ID: 673 959 666#

Rule Information:

This rule will primarily seek to establish a commercial bycatch fishery for lake trout in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan as part of Lake Whitefish fishing. Topics which may be addressed as part of this rulemaking include but are not limited to: lake trout management zones; locations where harvest may or may not occur, such as restricted fishing areas and refuges; season dates; size limits; total allowable catch (TAC) of lake trout; allocations of the TAC between the commercial and recreational fisheries; allocation of the TAC between individual commercial fishers; tagging requirements; reporting requirements; and potential lake trout tag transfers. This rule may additionally update lake trout sport fishery

regulations, as needed, including individual bag limits, and sport fishing seasons. The rule may include a sunset date.

Accessibility

For the hearing or visually impaired, non-English speakers, or those with other personal circumstances which might make communication at the meeting/hearing difficult, DNR will, to the maximum extent possible and with reasonable advance notice, provide aids including an interpreter, or a non-English, large-print, or recorded version of hearing documents. To access these resources, please contact the email address or phone number listed below as soon as possible.

Appearances at the Hearing and Submittal of Written Comments

The public has the opportunity to testify at the hearing. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged if you plan to provide spoken comments during the hearing. To pre-register, please download and complete the fillable [hearing appearance form](#) and send it to Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov.

Comments on the proposed scope statement must be received on or before February 13, 2025. Written comments may be submitted by U.S. mail, E-mail, or through the internet and will have the same weight and effect as oral statements presented at the public hearing.

Written comments and any questions on the proposed scope statement should be submitted to:

Department of Natural Resources

Attn: Kari Lee-Zimmermann – FH/4

P.O. Box 7921

101 S. Webster Street,

[Madison, WI 53707-7921](#)

Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov

The scope statement may be viewed at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/news/input/ProposedPermanent>

Comments can be made at: DNRAdministrativeRulesComments@wisconsin.gov

The scope statement may be reviewed, and comments made at: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/scope_statements/comment

Brad Eggold reported that the **Lake Whitefish Trawl Rule** will be going before the Natural Resources Board (NRB) scheduled for February 25-26, 2025 in Madison.

Discussion took place that the LMCFB needs to delay this process until the LMCFB has input into the Cod End Net mesh size matter, given consideration that the Susie Q Fishing Company has used this

same Cod End Net for over 9 years. However, the DNR wants to increase the size of the mesh opening. LeClair mentioned the trawl net is flat and thick verses the nets typically used for the Gill Nets or Trap Nets. The DNR explained that the measurement of the Nets was followed under NR25. The DNR selection was 2.25" Bars or 9" total of the 4 sides of the Cod End Net opening verses the Susie Q Code End Net, which was used for the last 9+ years of 2.125" Bars or 8.5" total of the 4 sides of the net opening.

Further discussion centered around the remaining **2025 LMCFB Priority list**, including:

1. The **DNR will not** eliminate the 10% bycatch rule in NR25.09(5) Wis. Adm. Code which has been in the Code for many decades and is one of the key elements in commercial fishing regulations.
2. Great Lakes Guide Reporting: The DNR will gain better information on the harvest of Lake Whitefish from sport anglers to aid in the management of Lake Whitefish including setting appropriate regulations.
3. 100% USE of Lake Whitefish. The DNR supports continued efforts of this initiative to market all parts of harvested Lake Whitefish to boost the potential earnings of commercial fishers.
4. Tracking of commercial fishing expenditures: The DNR will continue to utilize the department's finance system to track and report commercial fishing expenditures and make it available to all stakeholders.
5. Latent mortality study with UW-Stevens Point: The DNR will continue to work with UW-Stevens Point scientists to gain better understanding of the survival/mortality of Lake Whitefish once they are released from both sport and commercial fishing gears.
6. Monterey Bay Seafood Watch. The DNR will continue to provide the latest commercial information to Seafood Watch staff so that commercially harvested species in Wisconsin can continue their designation of "Best Choice" for consuming Wisconsin fish.

C. Yellow Perch 2025 harvest and management by Tammie Poali, DNR: Tammie reported in her presentation that the August 2024 water conditions on the Bay of Green Bay were very green from rain runoff and warm air temperatures. For every meter descending into the Bay there was a drop in temperature plus decrease in oxygen levels, measured in Celsius. The Temperature Buoy at Little Tail Point, Green Bay, measures the constant stratification of the water column down to 5 meters, with the average peak being May 2024 at 61.4 degrees which is the 2nd highest in 21 years, just behind the 2012 record of 62.5 degrees. At times these temperatures were >80 degrees F which equals Yellow Perch decreased catches during the April thru October fishing season. She further explained that the young of the year (YOY) had low catches in 2022 & 2023, because the water was too warm. The survey's which were completed did not indicate Yellow Perch reproduction. On August 9, 2022, the water temperature was 47 degrees F down to 62' and 45 degrees F on the bottom. Then on August 7, 2024 the water temperature was 69 degrees F down 62' and 57 degrees F on the bottom.

In 2023 the abundance of Yellow Perch totaled 3.2 million perch with a total being harvested by sport & commercial being 309,969 perch. In 2024 the commercial harvest in Green Bay was 51,519 perch, which was significantly less than the quota, since 2007, being 100,000 fish. The reported age of the harvested Yellow Perch was: 10% - 1 year old; 45% - 2year old; 32% - 3year old; 6% - 4year old. Lake Michigan has a closed Yellow Perch season. **The Commercial**

Fishers harvest only 51,519 (16.6%) plus the large Sport Harvest of 258,450 (83.3%) totaling 309,969 Yellow Perch harvested.

Tammie did mention that the White Perch in 2020 & 2021 are increasing in number & size. It was concluded that as White Perch numbers increase, Yellow Perch number decrease. Mark Marique commented that the Pensaukee River should be dredged in 2025, however the upstream river would not be dredged.

7. Old Business:

LeClair brought up Trawl Rule issues: The main discussion is the opening size of the Cod End Net. The present Cod End Net has been used for the past 9 years and measures 2.125" or 8.5" measuring all 4 sides of the Cod End Net opening, whereas the DNR measurement according to the ADM. RULES NR 25 is 2.25" or 9.0" measuring all 4 sides of the net opening. LeClair mentioned that the twine is thick, flat, no knots and woven together to withstand being dragged through the water at 3 nautical miles per hour, plus be sturdy enough to withstand impacts of underwater structures. Whereas a gill net is a modified monofilament stationary line. The rules for measurement of heavy-duty trawl nets should be different than gill nets or trap nets as they are all different types of gear, which are used to catch Lake Whitefish. LeClair mentioned that <2% of small Whitefish are caught and >90% are 20" or greater. The smaller fish are returned to the Lake immediately. Having a larger Cod End Net opening restricts the Lake Whitefish to larger Whitefish. There are not many 24" Lake Whitefish in Lake Michigan.

Mr. Henriksen mentioned that the DNR has an adequate amount of time for this Rule to be worked out (Sunset date October 2025), to get the correct measurements of the Cod End Net. Brad mentioned the measurement process is in the ADM. RULES herein referenced.

Charlie Henriksen brought up the verbiage contained within the Lake Trout Scope Statement, whereas on page 2, the words "by-catch" should be eliminated and as such Lake Trout should become a self-sustaining population as a DNR priority on Lake Michigan. Further, there are 3 main activities to manage Lake Trout: 1). Lamprey control, 2). Lake Trout stocking, 3). Control of Lake Trout morality. It should be noted that Wisconsin cut Lake Trout stocking and Michigan picked up that difference. Wisconsin used the now excess fish rearing capacity for Salmon related rearing.

Mr. Henriksen believes that the DNR should allocated a quota of say 10,000 Lake Trout to obtain data which the DNR wants. The LMCFB wants each individual fisher to discuss this matter at the February 13, 2025 Zoom Meeting at 3 PM, As here referenced.

Pawlitzke asked about the progress of the change of EFHRS from the DNR to DOA. Brad Eggold went over the Login Changes to Electronic Fish Harvest Reporting System (EFHRS): EFHRS was on the LMCFB Priority List. The Department of Administration (DOA) will be in charge of all software procurement and analysis for the other State Agencies such as the DNR. As such, the DOA will incorporate the EFHRS & web Access Management System (WAMS) into the State-of-Art "My Wisconsin ID" or "Go Wild" System. Brad mentioned:

- DOA is running behind in implementation, indicated the EFHRS consolidation is slated to change to February 2025. Implementation might take longer than expected.
- All Commercial Fishers will need new access credentials to login their catch data.

- DOA indicated there will be a 2-factor identification system and
- If the system is not operating properly, the Commercial Fishers would need to rely on paper records, until the system is perfectly operating.
- There had been no contact person assigned to the EFHRS reporting system.

8. Board Members Concerns: None

9. Comments and Announcements: Nothing to report.

10. Adjournment: Motion - Moved by Rick Johnson, seconded by Mark Marique. Motion passed unanimously at 7:43 P.M.

There was no next meeting scheduled.