

DRAFT
LAKE MICHIGAN COMMERCIAL FISHING BOARD
MEETING
March 14, 2024

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, Todd Stuth, Brett Schwarz, Dan Pawlitzke, Rick Johnson.

Member Absent: None

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

Anonymous Attendee: Meeting Guest.

Other Attendees Present: Will Henriksen, Dennis Hickey, Paul Burnette, Jay Virlee, Jack Tong, Bob Wincek Great Lakes Sportfishing Clubs, Carin Stuth, Chris?, David Naftzger, Jerry Fetterer, John Schmidt, Josh Hug, RF Jones, Susan Wells USFWS, Sam Pecornro, USFWS, Dale Hanson, USFWS, Ben Breaker, USFWS. Gary Seager phone 920-838-1910, 414-628-5609.

3. Approval of the Agenda

4. Approval of minutes of January 22, 2024; Motion made by Rick Johnson, seconded by Mark Maricque, All Aye.

5. Discussion Items:

A. Lake Michigan Lake Whitefish Trawling Update: On October 9, 2023, Mike LeClair sent out an email to the LMCFB containing 7 points pertaining to Trawling of Lake Whitefish for inclusion in the permanent Trawling Rule:

1. Whitefish trawling to be made legal year just like trap nets bycatch is similar and if bycatch becomes a problem, the net can be moved immediately
2. Trawl should be able to be used anywhere is zone 3, except for restricted areas, just like trap nets. There is minimal user conflict unlike trap nets
3. Will use camera but do not want to be restricted to stop fishing operations if camera breaks down. I've call Team Electronics and they told me to get parts, could be 3-4 weeks. The unit is old and to replace it could cost \$10,000. No other gear is required to have cameras. I think 10 years of data should be sufficient
4. Trawling for whitefish should be considered on Green Bay. Right now I have no quota. Probably won't be able to buy any because of availability and cost, but other fishers may want to trawl in the future. Michigan has allowed trawling for 40 years. I don't see what the problem would be to try it.

5. Trawling should be permitted without restrictions in months of August and September, as we have shown we stop fishing when it is not economical and possible changes in lake trout regulations.
6. Trawling time will be when trawl doors reach the bottom and come out of the water 1 hour drag.
7. Trawl dimensions should be up the fisher. The only part of the net that needs to be regulated is the mesh cod end 4 ½". Mesh sizes in the rest of the net would not be smaller but may be larger in order to make the net easier to pull.

Brad Eggold agreed to meet with Mike LeClair to discuss the above 7 issues during early April 2024, then meet with the LMCFB by May 13, 2024. Brad and Mike agreed they could meet over the computer to discuss these matters.

B. Lake Michigan bycatch reporting requirements: Bycatch aggregate reporting by the DNR for the 2024 season included Walleye, Muskellunge, Lake Sturgeon, Lake Trout Trawling. All bycatch was minimal for Lake Michigan.

C. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The MOU between the DNR and LMCFB had expired. The new expiration is December 31, 2028 and renewed every 5 years thereafter. Brad Eggold mentioned the DNR has a working agreement in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each experimental process undertaken each year. There were no comments from the LMCFB or commercial fishers, however, Bob Wincek mentioned that Titus Seilheimer original work requirements that there was to be an onboard monitor and onboard cameras, however, since trawling was essentially experimental those conditions then changed to cameras only. LeClair mentioned that when the "doors", essentially weights, carry the trawl nets to the lake bottom which takes about 10 minutes to complete. Further the net configuration also changed over each annual MOU. (Note; there were 5 annual MOUs entered into for this trawling experiment.)

D. Electronic Fish Harvest Reporting System (EFHRS): the EFHRS was on the LMCFB Priority List, was updated by DNR Staff along with feedback from Commercial Fishers as follows:

- Save and reuse the trap net identification tag without re-entering the information
- Allow administrators to delete Captains, License and Crew members
- Create searchable information in the data base
- Crew members are not sortable
- Next and previous entry buttons should view several saves
- Add Fisher's I.D. information
- Add Fleet Licenses to functions such as License entities
- Add additional ports for consolidated Licenses
- Each Commercial Fisherman use different coordinates. There should be a converter of these systems into the coordinates which the DNR uses.
- Utilize a hand-held devices to input catch related information into EFHRS.

E. Lake Trout Scope Statement progress: The Lake Trout Working Group indicates there needs more work on the surveying from Sheboygan to Kenosha. Additional survey data from Creel Survey, Mass Market of Age-related information plus additional Commercial Fishers by-catch data. The timeline begins in June thru September 2024 to develop a draft, route the draft and

then route the Scope Statement. Charlie asked and the DNR accepted that the LMCFB would be part of the process of approximately October 2024 thru December 2024.

F. 100% Great Lakes Fish: David Naftzer provided updates on environmentally sustainable growth utilizing the entire Whitefish based upon work done on Iceland Cod. Lake Whitefish is a prototype venture into reuse possibilities of by-products such as Collagen from skins & scales of the fish, protein hydrolysates from other fish heads & fish skeletal frames. All containments are removed during the processing of the fish plus it's a pledge from some of the Commercial Fishers to use 100% Great Lakes fish.

G. Larson Reef Mapping; Dale Hanson and Sam Pecornro of USFWS provided an assessment in Green Bay, Lake Michigan during April 2024 working with the WIDNR, USFWS, GSGP and NOAA as follows:

Phase 1: Physical Habitat Mapping includes Bathymetry; Back scatter diagrams; Derived layered mapping products.

Phase 2: Biological Assessment including Spawner Survey; Fish Egg disposition; Fish Egg predator densities and Invertebrate Inventory.

H. Webpage Update; additional photos were uploaded onto the site.

6. Old Business: The DNR has created a sign in sheet for those physically participating in the LMCFB meeting plus the computer software will provide the names of those participating via internet. Pawlitzke mentioned that the recent 2021 Great Lakes Salmon and Lake Trout Stamp sales had in excess of \$3 million Fund Balance.

- Brad Eggold read a direction from Justine Hasz, DNR as follows: "With the structural deficit in the fish and wildlife account, the fisheries management program currently has reduced spending ability. To manage this deficit we are prioritizing our workload and providing the best services possible within our existing resources. However, this does mean that some projects will be delayed and we will have reduced hiring of Limited Term Employee staff. We have prioritized hiring FTE staff and have made adjustments to accomplish this through reallocation of both supply and LTE dollars. The impact of these reductions includes reduced capacity to complete high priority work such as fish culture, creel surveys, detrimental species management, great lakes assessments, training, habitat projects and more". Thank you for the clarification on the DNR Budgets.

7. Board Members Concerns: Advertising Campaign results were sought to see if the ads created additional traffic to restaurants.

8. Comments and Announcements: There was a retirement of Jean Jean-Romback Bartels as NE Director. Jim Addis, former DNR employee, recently passed away. He was a big part of limited entry and our ITQ system foundation, who had produced a book around the Reflections of the Commercial Fishery focusing around the quota system set for a profitable commercial fishery.

9. Adjournment: Motion - Moved by Rick Johnson, seconded by Mark Marique. Motion passed unanimously at 8:07 P.M.

The next meeting is tentatively schedule for May 13, 2024.