

THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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No. 4

Summer Steelhead

By Jim Bedford

Runs of summer steelhead tend to peak in July and August if we have some cool stretches of weather. As quagga mussels have carpeted the bottom of Lake Michigan, they have greatly reduced the plankton in the lake and made it much clearer. The lack of plankton has made it tougher for hatchery summer steelhead smolts to find enough food and make the transition to the big water. It does seem like summer steelhead smolts have been

a bit more successful than winter steelhead at successfully making the transition during these tough times.

A thermometer is an important tool for Michigan river anglers, especially those that chase trout and salmon. It is put to use during all four seasons as we try to find water temperatures best suited to our quarry and the time of year. In the winter and spring we are usually looking for warmer water while in the summer and early fall the reverse is true. There is no season or species where

knowing the water temperature is more important than when you are after summer steelhead.

A number of years ago a friend told me about encountering a summer steelhead in a very small trout stream in southern Allegan County. We returned to explore the stream that the trout brook emptied into, the Middle Branch of the Black River. On an August afternoon with the air tem-

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Brett Hartford with bright summer run



Photo Credit: nativefishsociety.org

Steelhead Catch Rates on Northern Rivers

By Dennis Eade

deneade@charter.net

Lansing, MI — The Natural Resources Commission Subcommittee Report on fishing regulations for steelhead in the northern rivers (Manistee and Muskegon Rivers) was presented to the subcommittee commissioners prior to the NRC meeting in Lansing on Thursday, June 13th. Jay Wesley, Southern Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator and Randy Claramunt, Fisheries Chief, presented the results of the creel clerks' survey (over 1200 participants) outlining stocking numbers, total catch, hatchery stock versus natural reproduction, and perceptions regarding catch

and release. Of the participants surveyed most were catch and release fishers (50%) but acknowledged they harvest a few.

Stocking numbers for the Manistee River numbered 122,000 at 7.5 inches and another 150,000 fall fingerlings at 3-4 inches. Total catch was 36,000 steelhead which is an excellent return. Catch rate was 1.03 vs a return of 1.02 out West. Angler effort was high at 275,000. The highest since 1999. Of the steelhead included in the survey, 160 were clipped (adipose fin missing identifying it as a hatchery fish) or 50.2% and 159 wild steelhead or 49.8%. Wild steelhead (stream age - one year) numbered 103 or 68.2% of

the sample and age two wild steelhead numbered 48 and averaged 31.8% of the sample. The Muskegon River, which saw more effort, received 60,000 stocked fish at 7.1 inches. 47.0% were age one fish and 51% were age 3-4. In addition, 74,000 Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout (average length 6.7 inches) were planted to provide a summer time fishery. This strain grows to 14 inches by age 3.

Lake Michigan steelhead currently number a total of 20,000,000. The state stocks 1.5 million per year. Creel harvest numbers for 2023 was 18,000 and was

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Signed Agreement Moves Brandon Road Interbasin Project Forward

Sam Heilig, CEM-VR-CC@usace.army.mil
Jayette Bolinski, dnr.pio@illinois.gov

Joanne Foreman, ForemanJ@Michigan.gov

ROCK ISLAND, Illinois — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, and the states of Illinois and Michigan signed a project partnership agreement this week for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, moving the project forward into construction phase. This milestone agreement allows \$274 million in federal funding and \$114 million in state funding to be used for construction of the first of three construction increments of the \$1.15 billion project designed to prevent the upstream movement of

aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes.

"The USACE Rock Island District has been working diligently with our partners in the states of Illinois and Michigan to move this critical project forward," said Rock Island District Commander, Col. Aaron Williams. "We are excited to be entering this next phase of the project and are committed to preventing the upstream movement of invasive carp and other aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes."

Brandon Road Lock and Dam near Joliet, Illinois, has been identified as the critical pinch point where layered technologies could be used to stop invasive carp populations from moving into the Great Lakes. The Brandon Road Interba-

sin Project will implement a complex series of innovative deterrents at the Brandon Rock Lock and Dam site to prevent upstream movement of invasive carp and other aquatic nuisance species on the Illinois Waterway.

"Our multi-agency team of scientists and engineers has worked tirelessly over the last three years in combination with external stakeholders to design what we believe is an effective solution for protecting the Great Lakes watershed,"

"Interbasin"
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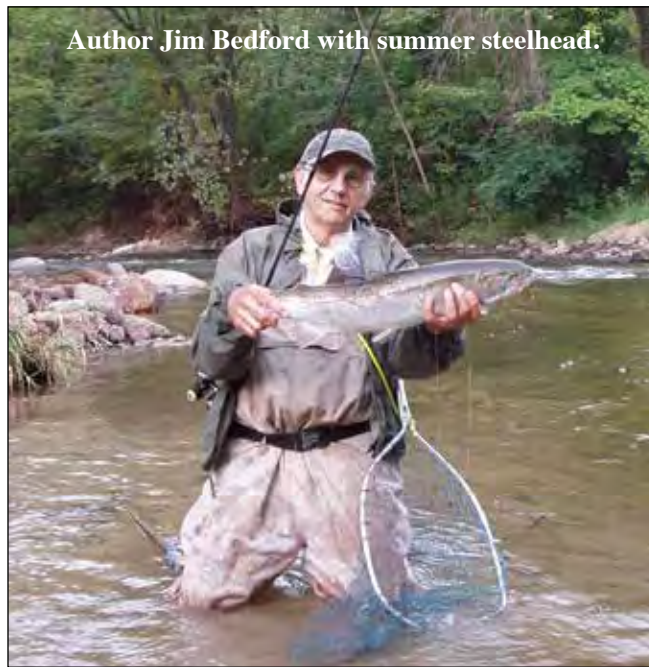


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Terri Bedford with summer steelhead.



Author Jim Bedford with summer steelhead.

definitely is cooler. Resident brown trout are present in the South Branch of the Galien and most of the summer steelhead that enter the Galien make a right turn at the forks. About the same distance to the north the aforementioned Black River flows into Lake Michigan at South Haven. This river also branches a short distance upstream from its mouth and the Middle Branch attracts most of the steelhead.

The same cool weather that results in a run in the St. Joseph will also trigger

smaller runs in the Kalamazoo and Grand Rivers. Like the St. Joe these are large warm water rivers that will be too warm for summer steelhead most of the time from late June to early September. Swan Creek is a cool tributary to the Kalamazoo and will attract steelhead when the weather warms up the main river. It flows in from the south about two river miles downstream from the Allegan Dam.

Even though there is a ladder at the Sixth Street Dam this is the most like-

ly spot to find some stray summer steelhead in the Grand River. Buck Creek is a brown trout stream that joins the Grand downstream from the dam and will attract summer steelhead when conditions are right. When a cool spell is prolonged the summer runs will ascend the ladder and be attracted to the Rogue River. I've caught them as far upstream as Prairie Creek but this is not something you can count on.

Michigan plants all of its summer steelhead in the Manistee River. This river also gets too warm in the summer below Tippy Dam. Pine Creek is always cold when it joins the Manistee and attracts summer runs at its mouth in the Udell Rollways campground. Bear Creek may draw fish but often it is as warm as the big river at their confluence.

Casting and retrieving spinners is a very effective technique for summer steelhead and is my favorite. The stream size and clarity and the brightness of the day influence my choice of spinners. Real silver is the choice on

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perature in the low 80s we found the Middle Branch to be a cool 65 degrees. We eagerly split up to fish adjacent sections from bridge to bridge. A mix of summer steelhead and large northern pike hammered our lures and we had a great time even though we landed less than half the fish we hooked.

No summer steelhead have ever been planted in this Black River or in the South Haven harbor where it joins Lake Michigan. Water temperature may have been one of the reasons they show up in this stream periodically. Indiana plants a large numbers of summer steelhead in the St. Joseph River because it is the state's only large tributary to Lake Michigan. The fact that for much of the summer this river is too warm for steelhead and the characteristic that Skamania strain steelhead don't seem to home in on their planted stream as well as other steelhead explains why these summer runs stray into other streams.

When the water temperature in the St. Joseph stays in the 60s you can have good success fishing below each of the dams. Berrien Springs usually provides the best fishing but you can also have good success below the Niles and Buchanan dams as well. At normal low summer water levels you can wade below each of the dams. However, launching a boat will always give you access to water you can't reach in your waders.

With the inevitable rise in the water temperature

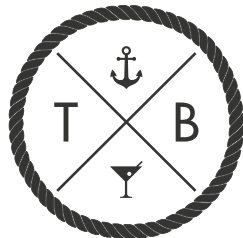
the steelhead that have run the St. Joe in July or August will seek cooler water. Tributary streams provide these respites. If the feeder creek is small often the steelhead will hold off the mouth of the creek or just enter the first pool or two if there is sufficient depth. Love, Lemon, and Farmer's Creeks and Big Meadow Drain are examples of the small cool inflows below Berrien Springs.

There are two cold tributaries that join the St. Joseph below Berrien Springs that are large enough to draw steelhead well upstream into them. Hickory Creek joins the St. Joe from the south just few miles upstream from Lake Michigan and Pipestone Creek, which joins the St. Joe about three river miles up from I-94 are both designated trout streams with resident browns present. Summer steelhead will remain in the lower reaches of these creeks until the weather cools in September. Fishing in the St. Joseph off the mouths of these streams can also be very productive.

The Dowagiac River is a good sized trout stream that joins the St. Joe in Niles. The dam about two miles north of Niles used to block the fish from moving further upstream has been removed giving the summer steelhead access to this good sized trout stream and its tributaries.

Nearby cool rivers also receive summer steelhead that stray from their stocked river. The Galien River joins Lake Michigan in New Buffalo, about 25 miles south of the St. Joe. The mainstream of this river is not a lot colder than the St. Joe but its south branch

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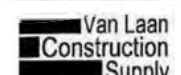
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“Catch Rates”
Continued from page 1

the best in the last three years. Alewife biomass is at 130 kilotons however, the current carrying capacity of the lake does not favor brown trout or lake trout.

In summary, Jay Wesley stated that the catch rates and total catch are not indicative of declining population. There is no need for further reduction in bag limits. Commissioner David Kozak asked whether wild fish show any genetic differences and Jay responded he didn't believe so since “the hatchery fish are only a generation away from being wild”. Commissioner Kozak expressed his appreciation for the report and looks forward to the results of the surveys of the guiding community now that they are licensed and required to report on their trip results monthly. Jay mentioned that close to 500 guide licenses have been issued since the Michigan Legislature passed the commercial guiding package.

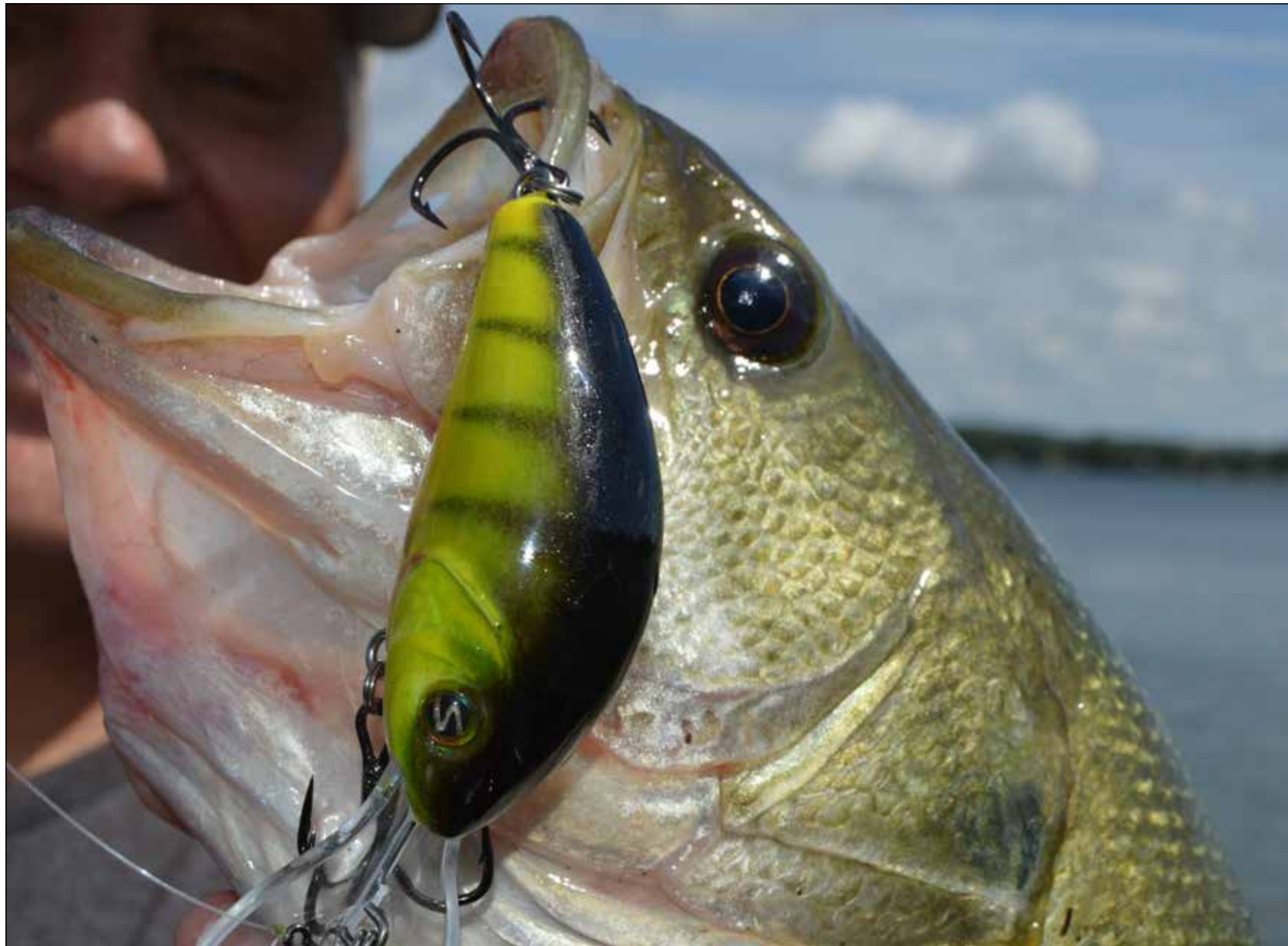
“Summer”
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dark days and when the water clarity is low while tarnished brass and black are at the other end of the spectrum when the creek is low and clear and the sun is out. Fluorescent orange tape will always be on the back of the blade and often I will use a spinner with a fluorescent orange painted blade. A spinner with a polished copper blade has become a very good summer steelhead spinner for me in recent years. Its effectiveness may be due to the reddish orange component of its flash.

Minnow plugs also work well for summer runs. Those that dive to a moderate depth like the suspending Rapala Husky Jerk seem to be ideal when fishing small streams for steelhead. They get down to the fish on upstream casts but don't dive so deep as to get hung up.

Summer steelhead orient to cover just like their cousins running in the cooler seasons. Retrieving your lure close to logs, overhanging brush, undercut banks, and big rocks is a key to success. These steelhead also have a strong affinity to deep riffles and you should fish this type of water hard when you find it. The choppy water surface keeps them from view just like more solid cover. Summer steelhead will hit right away when they are in the mood so it pays to move right along and cover lots of water.

Hope for some cool weather and keep your stream thermometer handy. Summer steelhead are aggressive strikers when the water temperature drops to the low to mid-sixties.



In the summer, it's tough to beat a crankbait on the deep weedline.

WORK THE WEEDLINE

By Bob Jensen

It's summer and the fish are hungry. At this time of year there are lots of techniques that we can employ to catch those hungry fish. The fish can be in deep water, shallow water, they can be suspended or they can be relating to structure. One very good way to catch a variety of fish species, day-in and day-out, is by fishing along and over the weeds that grow in deeper water. Here's how to go about that.

The type of weeds that we're talking about are mostly submergent vegetation. There will be bass in the shallower vegetation this time of year, but that's not what we're talking about for now. This time of year, in a variety of places, the vegetation that is so productive is cabbage and coontail. You can see these weeds if you're right over them, and sometimes they'll appear a bit above the water's surface, but for the most part they're below the surface. Almost every predator fish that lives in lakes that has cabbage or coontail will visit that area of vegetation regularly.

At times, like early and late in the day or on cloudy days, largemouth bass will spread out over the tops of the weeds. During the day, largemouth will dig into the weeds or hold on the deep edge of the weeds.

Walleyes, northern pike, muskies, and panfish will all gather on the deep edge of the weeds during the day, and sometimes the panfish will suspend out away from the weeds twenty yards or

so. They can sometimes be seen dimpling the surface as they feed on bugs that are on top of the water.

This is fun fishing. You never know what's going to eat your bait, but when you hit it right, and you can hit it right frequently on the weedline, you'll be getting bit regularly. You might catch a few bass, then a walleye comes along, then a pike or crappie, then a few more bass.

Crankbaits and plastic baits are the way to go on the weedline this time of year. If you're looking specifically for largemouth bass, tie on a Pro Model XD crankbait. If you're just looking to get bit go with a #5 Hornet crank. Bluegill or perch are good starting points for color, but blue/chartreuse or a shade of shad can be outstanding also.

Every now and then you'll feel your crankbait get hung on the vegetation. Rip it free, then let it float briefly. A strike will often occur when you start reeling again.

After working an area with the crankbait, grab a jig rod and throw a jig/plastic presentation. Experiment and let the fish show you what they want. It's hard to beat a KVD Ocho worm on an eighth or three-sixteenths ounce jighead. Start with a five or six inch Ocho and go bigger if the fish are hitting, smaller if they're not. Don't get too hung up on shapes. Try different looking plastics. You never know what you might discover. Many colors will work, but you usually won't go wrong with

plastic that has shades of blue or watermelon color in it.

Summer is a time of plenty in the underwater

world. There is lots of food and there are lots of fish looking for that food. If you're looking for a smorgasbord of fishing action

right now, in and around a submergent weedline is an outstanding place to start,, and finish.

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“Interbasin”

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said Scott Whitney, BRIP Project Manager at the USACE Rock Island District.

“Protecting the Great Lakes has always been and will always be a priority for the State of Illinois and after many years of this project eluding multiple administrations, I am thrilled to see it move forward. I want to thank our partners at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Michigan as well as our team in the governor’s office and at DNR for their years of work on this extraordinarily complex endeavor,” said Illinois Governor JB Pritzker. “Protecting the Great Lakes is not an undertaking that any one state or city can tackle alone, and I’m thrilled that we were able to forge a path that protects both the Great Lakes and ensures Illinois taxpayers do not shoulder a disproportionate share of the burden.”

“Today’s agreement will help us get shovels in the ground as soon as possible on the critical Brandon Road project,” said Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. “The Great Lakes

are the beating heart of Michigan’s economy, and Brandon Road will help us protect local communities and key industries, including fishing and boating, that support tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. I am grateful to Governor Pritzker of Illinois, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—especially the Rock Island District—and our congressional partners for their long-term support and partnership on this monumental task. Together, we will get the job done so we can protect our lakes and power economic growth for generations to come.”

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow said, “The Brandon Road Interbasin Project is essential to stopping invasive carp from wreaking havoc on our Great Lakes, and today we are hitting a major milestone – the start of the construction phase. I’ve worked tirelessly over the years to get this critical project to this point, alongside my partners in the U.S. Senate, Michigan, Illinois, and the Army Corps of Engineers. This is a big win that will protect our Great Lakes for generations to come.”

“This agreement is a pivotal step forward in preventing the spread of harmful, invasive carp throughout our Great Lakes,” said U.S. Senator Gary Peters. “For years, invasive carp have threatened our environment, as well as key industries that rely on healthy Great Lakes to help power our state’s economy. I’ve repeatedly advocated and worked to secure resources for this vital infrastructure project, and I’m thrilled that it will soon be underway.”

With the project partnership agreement signed, contracts for fabrication, continued design, leading edge deterrents and bedrock removal are now slated for solicitation in the coming weeks. Interested contractors can visit the website listed below for additional details.

For more information visit: www.mvr.usace.army.mil/BRIP/ or contact the USACE Rock Island District by phone at 309-794-5729 or email at: cem-vr-cc@usace.army.mil.

Project Partnership Agreement

Dear Fisheries Partner,

After nearly 10 years of feasibility studies and planning, engineering and design, construction will now begin on a project to protect the Great Lakes from invasive carp (also known as “Asian” carp; includes bighead, silver, and black carp). Today, Michigan has signed a Project Partner Agreement (PPA) as a co-nonfederal sponsor with Illinois to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for construction of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project to keep invasive carp out of the Great Lakes. The official press release is included below and was just released.

This milestone agreement unlocks \$274 million of federal and \$114 million of state funding for the first three phases of the \$1.15 billion project. Michigan has committed \$64 million to the nonfederal sponsor costs associated with this project.

The Brandon Road Lock and Dam is located near Joliet, Illinois, and is a critical pinch point to stop invasive carp populations from moving into the Great Lakes. The Brandon Road Interbasin Project will implement a complex series of deterrents, including sound, a flushing lock, and an electric barrier, to prevent upstream movement of invasive carp and other invasive species into the Great Lakes.

The first phase of the project will include fabrication of speakers for noise deterrents, continued design for Increments II and III, leading edge deterrents such as a bubbler to remove fish caught between barges before they move into the Brandon Road Lock, and bedrock removal for development of an engineered channel to support a state-of-the-art electric barrier and other deterrents. The project will take approximately 7-8 years to complete.

To date, we have no evidence of any live bighead, silver, or black carp in the Great Lakes.

The advancement of this project to the construction phase is because of the unwavering support of Governor Whitmer’s administration, Michigan’s congressional members and others throughout the Great Lakes Delegation, and the perseverance of stakeholder groups who understand the importance of protecting the Great Lakes from invasive carp and other invasive species. MDNR looks forward to collaborating with Illinois DNR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to bring this project to fruition.

If you would like an additional information, please contact Tammy Newcomb, Special Advisor to the Director, 517-930-3690, newcombt@michigan.gov

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**Dennis Eade, Executive Director
Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association**

MSSFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Dennis Eade



The Little Manistee River Weir egg collection this spring was a huge success. The timing could not have been better. The fish that came early did well in the pens and new fish arrived right on time. Since the Little Manistee River is not stocked, all but a few stragglers were wild fish returning to their home waters. Five million eggs were taken over four days with DNR staff from many northern Michigan offices joining together to collect and fertilize the eggs, assess the health, age and condition of the returning steelhead. Joe Micevich, Area Hatchery Manager overseeing Wolf Lake, Harriette and Platte River hatcheries provided a tour of the facilities to members of the Steelhead Task Force Committee, charged with gathering information for recommendations to the Natural Resources Commission, as well as some of the Commissioners who attended the egg taking event.

HB 5553, sponsored by Rep. Amos O'Neal, (D) Saginaw, to update the commercial fishing statute to protect game fish species from commercial harvest has not been given a hearing in the Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee in the House but neither has HB 5108 - Jason Morgan (D) Ann Arbor) which would allow state-licensed commercial take of game fish, including lake trout, smallmouth

bass, panfish, walleye, perch and other game fish been given a hearing. The Fish Producers Association continues to try to influence legislators by hosting fresh fish cook outs on Capitol grounds for various interest groups, but to date there is no movement on either bill. At the last Lake Huron Citizens Advisers meeting I voted against sending a letter to the MDNR to seek a compromise bill by sitting down with the commercial fishers because the fish producers will not accept taking game fish off the table as a demand for updating the statute. Some of



L to R, Rep. Amos O'Neal, Senator John Cherry and myself at the Michigan Legislative Sportsman Caucus breakfast.

and total catch are not indicative of a declining steelhead population. He also reported that approximately five hundred guide licenses have been issued since the Michigan legislature passed the commercial guiding package. (Begg the question that we may have more guides than the rivers capacity to service.)

The Michigan Legislative Sportsman Caucus Breakfast Meeting was held on June 13th in Lansing and I had the opportunity to visit with representatives and senators who share our passion for the outdoors. I spoke with Representatives Bollin, Beson, Lightner, O'Neal, Slagh, and VanderWall as well as Senators Bumstead and Cherry. All of them, with the exception of Rep. Timothy Beson from Bay City, were supportive of our position on updating the Commercial Fishing Statue to protect game fish. We need to continue making our points to any legislator who will listen.

The July/Aug edition of Great Lakes Sport Fishing News will be available on line only. Members can read the edition on line at MSSFA.org by clicking on the Magazine Tab and selecting the issue date. We encourage all chapters to link the edition to your website and Facebook page so your members have multiple ways to access the publication. The June Swoon is upon us as salmon and steelhead fishing on the big lakes is slow right now. Better fishing is around the corner as late July brings back more fish to the shallower waters off our harbors. Get out and enjoy some trolling time.



Olen Gannon, Michigan Department of Natural Resources fisheries technician at the Harrietta Field Office, is shown with a 20-pound steelhead. (Courtesy photo/Michigan Department of Natural Resources)

us sport fishing advocates worry what may happen in lame duck session after the election in November but I personally don't believe the Morgan bill will get passed in lame duck and if it did, I believe the Governor would



Ed Barr, a Michigan Department of Natural Resources fisheries technician, works with collected fish eggs at the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery. (Courtesy photo/Michigan Department of Natural Resources)

not sign it. I serve on the NRC Steelhead Task Force to study the potential causes of a drop in steelhead returning to the rivers this past fall and winter. It has been my opinion all along

that the cause is a capacity issue and not overharvest. My position was upheld by the report from the Natural Resources Commission Subcommittee on fishing regulations for steelhead in the northern rivers (Manistee and Muskegon) presented on June 13th at the NRC meeting in Lansing. Jay Wesley, Southern Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator presented the Creel Survey Report which concluded that the catch rates

OPINION:

Pigeon Lake JH Campbell Public Access Site at Risk

By Dennis Eade
deneade@charter.net

Port Sheldon Township, MI — Michigan is known for its hidden gems, many of which are unknown to much of the public. One such place is the charming boardwalk at the JH Campbell Consumers' Energy site located on Michigan's west coast between Holland and Grand Haven. Visitors from near and far come to this riverside slice of paradise to enjoy the scenic dunes and to catch fish. It all came about as part of the Consumers' Energy settlement with the state of Michigan over the fish kill incident experienced at

their Ludington Hydroelectric Power Plant decades ago which ultimately created the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. The Trust supports local projects to enhance fishing access, habitat restoration and amenities that enhance the outdoor recreational experience.

Since the 1960's, Consumers Energy has held up its end of a bargain with the MDNR (Department of Natural Resources) to maintain the JH Campbell Public Access Site as compensation for fish losses. With Consumers Energy closing its coal factory along Pigeon Lake, the upkeep of this cherished spot is up for debate.

To make matters worse, neither the MDNR, Port Sheldon township, nor Consumers Energy wants to take on the financial burden of maintaining the site. The continued accessibility of the boardwalk and jetty is uncertain.

Anglers and other outdoor recreational enthusiasts already face increased challenges to access and opportunities for recreation. If the township were to remove public access to the Pigeon Lake site, it would ruin these opportunities going forward. Not only for the local residents but scores of visitors both regionally and out-of-state who look forward to com-

ing here for years, so removing the access would decrease tourism.

Anglers and citizens alike must be proactive, or we may lose this critical access. Generations of anglers have come to cast their lines and share stories of the fish that swim in these waters. Its shores harbor memories of successful catches and tales of the one that got away. If we do not speak up to keep the JH Campbell Public Access site, we may lose a cherished outdoor spot and piece of history. If you value outdoor recreation, share your experiences and valued opinions of the Pigeon Lake site at any upcoming

Post Sheldon Township board of Trustees public meetings scheduled for July 10th, August 14th, September 11th and October 9th at the township offices at 16201 Port Sheldon Street.

The J.H. Campbell Power Plant on Pigeon Lake on July 1, 2022.
(Garret Ellison / MLive)



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By Holland Area Convention + Visitors Bureau

The Holland Harbor Lighthouse illuminates a remarkable shoreline. Standing at the gateway to Lake Michigan's renowned fishing waters, "Big Red" lies across the channel from the Holland State Park's glorious windswept sands. A boardwalk stroll brings you to the historic Pump House Museum, the Mt. Pisgah dune climb, and a towering ice cream cone at the General Store. Best of all, Big Red is a short bike ride from Yacht Basin Marina, site of two summer fishing tournaments, each with a \$10,000 grand prize!

Sign up for both tournaments at bigredclassic.com. On August 1st, weigh your best seven fish for a chance to bring home the top prize at the all-new Tulip City Tri-Port tournament. Then

from August 2nd to 4th, the annual Big Red Classic Sport Fishing Tournament (BRC) gets underway. The women's competition kicks off on the 2nd, with all-hands-on-deck festivities continuing into the 3rd and 4th.

As a nautical bonus, the Michigan Lighthouse Festival chose the same weekend to host its annual event, and this year it's in Holland! Your ticket includes a cruise aboard the Holland Princess, a theatrical performance, and private group entry to the Holland Museum. michiganlighthousefestival.com.

Angling to visit Holland another time? The beautiful blue waters of Lake Michigan are open year round! Known as some of the best freshwater fisheries in the world, this Great Lake is full of steelhead and brown trout, as well as coho, king and Chinook salmon. Plus, surrounding inland lakes

and rivers brim with wall-eye, perch, bluegill, and bass.

On the off chance someone in your party tires of casting a line, Holland offers much more than fishing fun. Boaters often make a "Pickle Run" (towards the Heinz Pickle factory) for happy hour at Boatwerks or the free Friday night lakeside concerts in Kollen Park. From there, it's only a 15-minute walk to downtown Holland where you just might find a street performer strumming, juggling, or break dancing outside one of 100+ specialty boutiques, breweries, and bistros. Plus, there's an amazing farmers market, miles of dedicated bike paths, and constantly changing special events. (BTW, if you happen to visit during the BRC, Art in the Park could be a worthy outing on August 3rd).

Only in Holland can you experience all the ame-

Photo credit: Big Red Classic at facebook.com



Holland

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This paper has no paid writers and has a grass roots style. Its writers are the every day fishermen who share their techniques and fishing adventures; and the paper has become well known for its **January Special Edition** or "*Show Edition*" that is seen at all the spring expos and sport, boat and fishing shows throughout the Great Lakes.

Information in the paper covers the entire Great Lakes Basin region from Minnesota to New York including all five of the Great Lakes and their tributary streams.

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Lake Superior Wild Steelhead, Managing for Self-Sustaining Populations

By Cory Goldsworthy

In case you haven't heard, there is a long-standing debate amongst this great nation's steelhead anglers — are Great Lakes steelhead “real” steelhead? Although not native, juvenile steelhead in Lake Superior tributaries still undergo smoltification — the physiological change that prepared their West Coast ancestors for adult life in saltwater — putting a scientifically defensible end to the debate. If more evidence was needed, the potamodromous adults mi-

grate from the freshwaters of Lake Superior to the freshwater tributaries the same way the anadromous sea run adults migrate from saltwater to freshwater to spawn. West Coast steelhead were first introduced in Lake Superior in 1883 from the McCloud River system in northern California, and subsequent stocking events from other sources occurred through 1920. These fish naturalized to the freshwater environment, established spawning populations, and have provided a very popular sport fishery ever since.

This fishery also provides a relatively small but very passionate and dedicated following of anglers that have driven the focus of steelhead management for the past 30-plus years.

The management history of steelhead in Minnesota tributaries to Lake Superior is long, complex, and at times cumbersome; however, it is important to understand the management actions of the past, what we learned from them, and how they guide our management strategies into the future. Encapsulated in this history is a decades-long

shift in philosophy from an almost harvest-only mindset to a robust catch-and-release ethic amongst many anglers, with a stark divide occurring between folks swinging egg patterns in a river or trolling stickbaits and spoons on the “Big Lake”.

I grew up steelhead fishing Lake Superior tributaries in the western Upper Peninsula (U.P.) of Michigan, an almost Alaskan-esque place, where the inhabitants are affectionately known as Yoopers and the winters are long and snowy thanks to prevailing west

winds picking up moisture from the Big Lake and dropping it on the rugged landscape. All the snow and consistent groundwater make the U.P. tributaries ideal spring steelhead fisheries. Steelhead fishing was a rite of passage from the long winter into the few snow-free months we got to enjoy, and no better feeling could be had than warm sun on your face, the smell of cedar trees in the melting woods, and the sounds of the river. My father worked in an iron ore mine and when he had a long weekend off in the spring he would

grab the tent, my brother and I, some cans of beans and head to the Big Huron River at Big Eric's Bridge. If we caught steelhead, we cooked them over the fire wrapped in tinfoil with butter and onions. If we didn't catch any it was just beans and perhaps a stray hot dog or two. He would ferry my brother and I across the river on his back until we were old enough to cross on our own. It was a great place to be as a kid and a great way to learn many life lessons, like which end of the knife is the sharp end when cutting a hot dog stick as well as the more difficult lesson of (cue your dad's voice), “Patience...” - which was always followed by a slight pause for effect and finished with “is a virtue” when I would become visibly frustrated getting hung up on a rock for the hundredth time forcing me to replace sinkers or, worse yet, attempt to tie in an entirely new rig with frozen fingers. Growing up steelhead fishing in my formative years has given me first-hand knowledge and experience as to why steelheaders are the most passionate of anglers I now get to work with, reinforcing what a brilliant graduate advisor once told me, “In fisheries management you are dealing with people's passions, livelihood, or both, and you need to understand and respect that if you want to be successful.”

Lake Superior is 31,700 square miles of cold, deep, unproductive water and is far from ideal Pacific salmonid habitat. Minnesota manages approximately 7% of Lake Superior and the tributaries that feed it are located on what is universally known in Minnesota as “The North Shore” which stretches 150 miles and is geologically different from neighboring states and provinces. Glacial activity created waterfall barriers along the North Shore resulting in only 54 miles of below-barrier spawning and rearing habitat across 16 of the best tributaries. Approximately 56 miles of additional habitat is accessed for spawning and rearing in the Knife River system, where a catch-and-sort fish trap allows Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff to collect data and pass fish above the first barrier. The bedrock and clay substrates limit groundwater contributions to tributaries that rely primarily on snowmelt and rain runoff to maintain adequate flow and also makes the tributaries notoriously “flashy” systems. Because of this flashiness and the lack of adequate below-barrier spawning and rearing habitat, Minne-

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The Port Sheldon buoy and the South Haven buoy play a key role in boater safety and successful angler outings on Lake Michigan. The buoys provide real-time data on wave height and frequency, wind speed and direction, and water temperatures from the surface to 70 feet below. Originally deployed in 2014 through a grant from NOAA, these buoys have provided critical life-safety and fishery environment information, enabling us to be better at our sport and to be safer while fishing.

Anyone can access the information generated by the buoys at any time through a text or on the internet. The valuable data created is all free of charge to the public, but each one of these buoys cost nearly \$15,000 per year to operate. There is no longer any government funding for these buoys; all funds to continue their operation come from individuals, organizations, and local businesses passionate about Lake Michigan.

On one hand, the cost to maintain these buoys is significant. But on the other hand we have hundreds of teams and thousands of anglers on the Trail. That means the math is on our side! By working together we can cover at least a big chunk of that cost if not the whole thing! So I'm challenging you to step up and help! Just before we went to print I made a \$50 donation to each Buoy and I hope you'll follow suit.

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CATCH PRESSURED FISH



When an area is getting a lot of pressure and fishing slows, try a different technique or different area.

By Bob Jensen

It was a couple of years back. Some friends and I had gathered for a day of fishing. The word was out that the walleyes on one particular lake were on the bite. When we arrived at the hot lake, there were many, many other anglers there also. This created an abundance of fishing pressure and made the walleyes change their ways. They quit doing what they had been doing, and that made the catching tougher for the folks who didn't adapt. If you adapted, you caught walleyes: If you didn't, you didn't. Here's what we did to catch walleyes when the catching got tough.

The walleyes on previous days had been suscep-

tible to a wide variety of presentations. Crankbaits, spinner rigs, live-bait rigs and jigs were all working. At that time, there weren't very many boats on the lake, but the anglers that were there were getting bit.

When we hit the water, it was apparent that the news of the fast walleye action was out. We arrived at the boat ramp as the sun was coming up and the parking lot was already full. The best spots were covered with boats. We went to a structure that had been very productive on previous days, and there were at least twenty boats there. We fished a little while, but realized quickly that we needed to do something different if we wanted to get bit.



Photo Credit: www.ndow.org

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The previously productive spot was a large reef, and the walleyes had been scattered all over it. They weren't any more. We moved out to the edge of the reef where there were no boats. We slowly cruised around with an eye on the sonar looking for fish. We found that now, instead of being scattered all over the reef, they were schooled tightly in small groups.

When we found a group we fished them. And, instead of the fish eating whatever we used as they had in previous days, they were very selective. They wanted live bait rigs tipped with either a leech or a crawler. They would also hit spinner rigs, but they were very color selective: They wanted a blue blade. No other color was nearly as productive. We had to present our baits in a certain way if we wanted to get bit.

When we caught a fish, it seemed to activate the others in the group. We would usually catch a couple more, then they'd shut off. When that happened we went looking for another group.

We used a variety of different types of live-bait rigs. We even dropped some slip-bobber/leech rigs on the walleyes. But the action wasn't as fast as we had hoped. So we did what we usually do when the fish are playing hard to catch. We moved to a different lake. One that wasn't getting so much pressure, had darker water, and was home to a good population of largemouth bass. We caught a few walleyes, then switched to bass. We threw Ocho worms on a jighead along the deep weedline. Action was good. So was the camaraderie. Catching fish with friends is a good reason to go fishing.

For the next few months we can expect fishing pressure to have an effect on the fish we're chasing. If you keep the things we just talked about in mind, you can continue to experience success even when you're sharing the fish with lots of other anglers.



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sota’s steelhead population is smaller than that of Ontario, Wisconsin, or Michigan. On average the adult spawning run at the Knife River, Minnesota, fish trap is 440 fish while the Bois Brule River, Wisconsin, fish trap sees 6,190 steelhead on average.

Below-barrier habitat is quite inhospitable for trout for the majority of the year — the lack of good groundwater can cause water temperatures in the summer to exceed 75 degrees and in the winter ice can freeze completely to the bottom of the streambed. In fact, initial results of a recent genetic study have indicated little to no natural reproduction has occurred below-barriers for fall spawning species like brook trout in Minnesota tributaries to Lake Superior. Numerous major storm events have occurred over the past 10 years that did substantial damage to habitat and negatively impacted numerous year-classes of juvenile steelhead. Today’s steelhead population in Minnesota is likely reduced by as much as 80% from record-highs in 2016, which highlights just how little control fishery managers have over the bigger drivers of population abundance like climate change, predation (in our case by



Minnesota steelhead anglers have been key advocates and partners for managing North Shore steelhead as wild, self-sustaining populations. Photo courtesy Minnesota Steelheader, <https://minnesotasteelheader.com>

a rehabilitated lake trout population), and changing or degraded habitat conditions. The few levers management agencies can pull that can influence populations are regulations, stocking, and habitat protection and rehabilitation — all of which have been, and continue to be, implemented as part of a long-term strategy for steelhead management.

Minnesota waters of Lake Superior supported an abundant harvest-oriented steelhead fishery from the 1940s through the 1960s but populations declined in

the 1970s and 1980s, corresponding to changes in the Lake Superior fish community — particularly the beginning stages of lake trout rehabilitation from invasive sea lamprey predation, habitat degradation, increased fishing pressure, and under-regulated harvest. In response, the Minnesota DNR initiated a number of programs including alteration of natural barriers to allow fish passage, installation of habitat structures to provide additional spawning and rearing habitat, and stocking programs. Adult

and juvenile fish traps were also constructed to monitor spawning runs and progress towards rehabilitation.

Initial efforts to rehabilitate steelhead were only partially successful and numbers continued to decline. Between 1960 and 1990, tributary fishing pressure increased 5-8 times and effort to catch one fish increased from 12 to about 65 angler-hours. A series of meetings were held in the winter of 1991/1992, and public input from these meetings was then used to develop the 1992 North

Shore Steelhead Plan. Management strategies included more restrictive fishing regulations, revised stocking strategies, beaver management, construction of additional migratory fish traps, delineation of long-term stream-monitoring stations, a shore wide genetics study, an economics study, and a variety of other projects. The importance of long-term planning for steelhead rehabilitation was incorporated into future efforts such as the 2003 Rainbow Trout management plan for the Minnesota waters

of Lake Superior and the 2006 and 2016 Fisheries management plan for the Minnesota waters of Lake Superior.

The first regulation for unclipped (wild produced) steelhead in tributaries below barriers was implemented in 1953 as a shore-wide bag limit of 10. The regulations were changed in 1966 to allow a bag limit of 5, only 3 greater than 16 inches, and a minimum length limit of 10 inches. These regulations were in place from the mid-1960s through the early 1990s and more restrictive regulations were adopted as steelhead populations continued to decline. The Minnesota DNR responded with a regulation change to a bag of 1 over 28 inches in 1992 and subsequently to a catch-and-release only regulation in 1997, which still exists today.

Experimental stocking of hatchery-strain rainbow trout yearlings began in Minnesota in the 1970s to supplement efforts to rehabilitate wild steelhead. In 1973, the Kamloops strain was stocked to provide a put-grow-and-take fishery and reduce pressure and harvest on naturalized steelhead populations. All Kamloops were given an adipose fin clip to differentiate them from wild

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State of Michigan Invests \$1M in FishPass

By Leah Bagdon McCallum, Community Engagement Officer

FishPass is the capstone of a more than 20-year restoration project on the Boardman/Ottaway River to reconnect the river with the Great Lakes. The project broke ground in May, and it will replace the failing Union Street Dam with a new, complete barrier to all fish with the capability to sort and selectively pass desirable fishes (lake sturgeon, lake trout) while blocking harmful invaders like sea lamprey.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) will receive \$1,000,000 from the State of Michigan in the fiscal year 2025 budget. Funds will support the construction of FishPass in Traverse City, MI.

“We are thrilled to receive this investment,” said Dr. Marc Gaden, Executive Secretary of the GLFC. “While FishPass is in Traverse City, it is a project for everyone – having a positive impact all over the Great Lakes and beyond – and we are honored to accept this support from the State of Michigan. The Commission and its partners are particularly grateful to State Senator John Damoose for his leadership in securing these funds, and for his commitment to the Great Lakes.”

State Senator John Damoose (MI-37) was the lead advocate for the inclusion of FishPass in the State budget. “I was happy to champion this exciting Great Lakes restoration and protection project,” said Senator Damoose. “FishPass will replace an aging piece of infrastructure, and put Northern Michigan at the center of leading edge freshwater research that will have positive impacts

for generations.”

State funds will help to support the final phases of construction, which include most of the upland public amenities and universally accessible design features.

“FishPass will be great for the health of the river,” said Traverse City Manager Liz Vogel, “but it will also be great for the people of our region. This investment will help make possible a

safe, green, accessible public space in the heart of our downtown.”

Earlier this year, the City of Traverse City received an EGLE Dam Risk Reduction Grant for FishPass. Construction of critical in-stream, or “wet” project elements, including dam replacement and the fish passage channel, is underway and expected to finish in 2026. Simulta-

neously, efforts to finalize costs and funding for “dry” elements such as an educational facility, landscaping enhancements and naturalized river channel elements are underway. This phased approach ensures that all project elements will be completed effectively and on schedule – with the total project targeted for completion in 2027.

FishPass addresses

public safety as the Union Street Dam was rated in fair-to-poor condition according to a 2021 MDEQ Dam Safety Unit inspection. The new, robust barrier, will reduce the risk of dam failure and enhance flood control, ensuring the safety of residents and infrastructure. To learn more about FishPass, visit: <https://www.glfc.org/fishpass.php>.



Fine Tune Your Summer Fishing

by Bob Jensen

Fishing can be like the weather in mid-summer: Both can be very hot. To take part in this potentially fast action, you’ll need to do things a little differently than you would at other times of the year. Following are some of those things.

In the summer when the fish want to bite it works well to use faster moving baits and fish through areas quickly. If the fish are going to bite, they’ll let you know right away.

However, if the bite is slow, you might be better off fishing slow and really working an area thoroughly. If you know the body of water well, concentrate on spots that you know hold fish and work them over.

Let’s say we’re fishing for largemouth bass. Usually in the summer, early and late in the day are when the fish go on a good bite. This is when you’ll want

to use a fast moving bait, maybe a buzz-bait, spinner-bait or crankbait.

When the sun gets higher and the bite slows down, try fishing slower with plastic baits rigged on a jig. Fish around vegetation, docks, or any other form of cover where bass hang out.

Fish can be very selective when they get finicky. On a recent mid-summer fishing trip, we experienced one of those days when the fish were being way too selective. We were fishing for largemouth bass. It was an overcast day, so the bite remained pretty good throughout the day. Good that is, if we were using the right bait. My boat partner and I were both throwing plastics, trying different shapes, colors, and sizes. We went through a lot of baits, but a five inch KVD Ocho worm in the Green Pumpkin was by far most productive. The Ocho is a bulky bait, straight tail. It has a lot of subtle action. A quivering action would

best describe it. The same bait an inch shorter or an inch longer caught fish, but it was apparent that the five inch size was preferred. Color is a consideration whenever you go fishing, but at times it’s a huge factor. So is bait shape and size. Give the fish plenty of options until they show you what their preference is on that day.

I recall another summer situation where the fish, this time walleyes, wanted the bait presented just so. We were on the Bay of Green Bay. This was a good number of years ago when we were learning that walleyes suspend more than we at the time thought. On this day, the walleyes were over water about thirty feet deep, but most of them were seventeen to twenty feet below the surface. We ran our spinners a foot or two above the surface. Any color spinner was good early in the day, but as the sun got more overhead, the fish got much

more color selective. They wanted a very subtle color. Light blue was best. When the fish are picky, we really need to fine-tune our presentation.

Mid-summer fishing is

heating up. It’s fun to be on the water when the sun comes up, catch some fish, then take a mid-day break. Maybe go to town to see the turtle races or whatever. But be back on the water in

the early evening. By doing so, you’ll be taking full advantage of all that summer has to offer in the way of fish.



Air temperatures were in the upper 80’s when Mike Frisch got this bass to bite.



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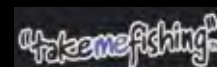
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steelhead and were stocked near the population center of Duluth. These harvestable fish were not stocked further “up the shore” for fear of genetic introgression with wild steelhead. Through time, concern of introgression increased as anglers would routinely see both strains spawning on the same redds. A study using steelheaders to collect genetic samples documented introgression in 2017 and in response the Minnesota DNR transitioned to a genetically screened wild Lake Superior strain for stocking its put-grow-and-take steelhead fishery while maintaining a catch-and-release only regulation on all wild (adipose fin intact)

steelhead. Steelhead fry have also been stocked upstream of the first natural fish barriers on tributaries to supplement the limited below-barrier fish production. Fry are stocked soon after hatching meaning they cannot be marked to differentiate them from wild produced steelhead. In an attempt to evaluate contribution the above-barrier fry stocking program had to adult populations, the program was discontinued in 2017 with the goal of determining which rivers could maintain adult runs naturally and which rivers needed supplemental stocking. This management evaluation continues today and future discussions will include whether those rivers that cannot maintain adult runs naturally need to be stocked

and which rivers MNDNR could manage for other species including brook trout, Lake Superior’s only other native “trout” (charr) besides lake trout.

A multi-phase yearling stocking program was implemented in 1990 to evaluate the returns of stocked smolts to the French and Knife rivers. Phase 1 examined the cost and feasibility of rearing to smolt size (≥ 5 inches). Approximately 20,000 adipose clipped yearlings were stocked annually from 1990 through 1993 in the French River. In phase 2, approximately 40,000 adipose-clipped yearlings were produced annually from 1997 through 2002. The adult returns

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A Minnesota DNR fish biologist handles a wild steelhead captured in the Knife River fish trap on Lake Superior’s North Shore. Photo Courtesy MNDNR

10 Things We Can Do To Protect Our Fisheries

Angler activism takes many forms, here are just a few...

By Todd Tanner
<https://www.hatchmag.com>

It’s 2024 and far too many of our fisheries here in the U.S. are in serious trouble. Fortunately, there are some positive steps each of us can take going forward. While not every suggestion below will be a good fit for every single angler, be sure to check as many as possible off the list this year.

LEARN

It’s hard to have a positive impact if you don’t know what’s happening. Take the time to learn about the different threats to our fisheries, and especially about the threats to your local waters. Doing so will help you make informed choices and maximize your contributions.

Writer and conservationist Johnny Sain recently pointed out that we need to educate ourselves on all the major issues facing our fisheries, as well as the proposed solutions and the agencies and NGOs working to implement those solutions.

JOIN

Join at least one conservation organization focused on protecting our fisheries, then donate whatever time and money you can afford to help that organization achieve its goals. If you live in the United States, you might consider supporting Trout Unlimited, or MSSFA, or Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, or the Ocean Conservancy, or The Freshwater Trust, or the nonprofit group I run, Conservation Hawks.

SWITCH

Anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change is the single biggest threat to both our fisheries and our future. One way to address that threat, and to limit the amount of CO2 that you’re personally responsible for pumping into the atmosphere, is to make the switch from an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle to an electric vehicle (EV).

Five years ago you couldn’t purchase an electric pickup or an electric SUV with reasonable range. Now, with excellent new electric pickups from Ford and Rivian, and brand new electric SUVs from Rivian, Hyundai, Kia, Ford, Volkswagen, Tesla, BMW, Acura, Mercedes, Audi, Nissan, Toyota, Subaru and Volvo, anglers have plenty of choices. (In addition, Motor Trend just named the all-electric Chevy Blazer EV as its 2024 SUV of the Year.) Of course, not everyone needs — or can afford

— a new vehicle right now. But if you can handle the expense, it’s time to stand up for our kids & grandkids and make the switch from fossil fuels to electric.

CARRY

Carry a small garbage bag with you when you head for the water, then make a point of picking up trash for a few minutes before you drive home. Not only will you leave the landscape in better shape than you found it, but you’ll set a positive example for everyone who sees what you’re doing. Given the rampant insanity of modern American culture in 2024, we need more people who are willing to do the right thing in public. Good deeds beget other good deeds, so take pride in setting a solid example for other anglers.

CHOOSE

Pick an issue that you feel is important and dive into it. Whether that’s climate change, or advocating for minimum in-stream flows, or better angling regulations, or invasive species, or dam removal, or pollution, or hatcheries — or something else entirely — is up to you. Scott Bosse of American Rivers suggests writing your state’s congressional delegation and asking them to restore the protections that the Supreme Court stripped from the Clean Water Act. Author and conservationist Hal Herring believes we can use the Farm Bill as an incentive for landowners to buffer wetlands and watersheds from agricultural runoff. River ecologist Jock Conyngham thinks we should revamp our National Flood Insurance Program. There are a ton of important issues out there, and while climate change towers over them all, we can each choose where to spend whatever time and energy we have to offer.

FISH

When you’re on the water, fish with empathy. Fish with respect. Fish with an uncommon and conscious decency, and with the knowledge that everything in the natural world is intimately connected to everything else. What does that look like? Pinch your fish quickly. Play your fish quickly. Keep them wet rather than taking them from the water. Limit your photos and videos, and skip the hero shots. If you pack it in, pack it out. Pay attention to the water temperatures and leave the trout alone when the water is too hot. Be grateful for our fisheries and focus on how fortunate we are to spend our free time out on the water. Long

story short, our fishing is a gift and we should never lose sight of that fact.

YOUTH

Take a kid fishing. Take them to a pond, or a stream, or the ocean and show them what it’s all about. And then, when you’re out on the water, think about your responsibility to that particular young person, and to all of our kids & grandkids. It’s up to us to make sure that we protect and preserve our fisheries. Not just for ourselves, but for future generations. If we don’t stand tall right now, our children and grandchildren will suffer for our shortcomings. Please don’t let that happen.

DISCUSS

Talk to your friends, your family and your fishing partners about the importance of protecting our fisheries, and about our responsibility to pass along healthy waters and landscapes to future generations. Numbers matter, and the more people who stand up for our fisheries, the better the odds that we’ll be successful. Oh, and when you’re talking to others, be kind and thoughtful. To quote Tim Romano of Flylab, “Remind folks that their everyday actions have major ‘downstream’ consequences for everything we love and cherish about our fisheries. Many times I think folks like us take this for granted and assume the weekend warrior understand these issues. Most don’t. Educate without browbeating or condescension.”

CALL

Call your senators and your representative and ask them to do more to address the single biggest threat to our fisheries: climate change. You’ll notice that I didn’t suggest that you use e-mail, or text, or snail mail. Phone calls typically have a greater impact. Call your senators and representative at their office during regular business hours, then tell the staffer who answers the phone who you are, where you live, that you’re an angler, and that you expect Senator X or Representative Y to make solving the climate crisis a major priority going forward. You don’t need to yell, scream or swear — in fact, doing so may well be counterproductive — but be sure to tell the staffer that their boss needs to do more to limit our CO2 emissions and address climate. If you need help finding the right

**“Protect”
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2024 Tentative Print Schedule		
Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/13/23	01/03/24
2	02/14/24	03/04/24
3	04/12/24	05/03/24
4	06/12/24	07/02/24
5	08/14/24	09/03/24
6	10/11/24	11/04/24



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The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA) is a multi-state, non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public on improving, preserving and promoting sport fishing, the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers. Commonly referred to as *The Michigan Steelheaders*, or simply *Steelheaders*. MSSFA represents sport fishing families in the Great Lakes region. MSSFA encourages the strictest observances of sport fishing laws and ethical fishing practices. www.MSSFA.org

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MSSFA Board of Directors Meetings 2024

Via TEAMS - 6:00pm

Wed. August 21

*Wed. October 16

Wed. December 11

*In person meeting at MUCC in Lansing.

MSSFA State Board of Directors, Officers and Committee Chairs

Dennis Eade	Executive Director Lake Michigan Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee Lake Huron Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee	deneade@charter.net
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Deb Shephard	Membership Coordinator	mssfamembership@charter.net

**“Superior”
Continued from page 10**

from Phases 1 and 2 provided additional harvest opportunities for rainbow trout in Minnesota waters. Phase 3 evaluated how stocking lo-

cation influenced juvenile steelhead survival. Approximately 40,000 steelhead yearlings were given a non-harvestable fin clip and were stocked annually into the Knife River from 2003 through 2007. In 2007,

MNDNR met with constituents to reevaluate the yearling stocking program and a decision was made to discontinue all steelhead yearling stocking. The main reasons for this decision were poor returns, high

program costs, and genetic concerns.

These management actions highlight almost thirty years of stakeholder guided management planning that helped rehabilitate steelhead populations

to record numbers in 2016 when over 1,000 spawning adults were passed above the Knife River trap. In the eight years since then, we have witnessed a cycle of droughts and floods that have impacted juvenile survival in the rivers and have seen native lake trout numbers continue to increase — one of the greatest restoration stories of all time in fisheries management, but one that also comes at a cost to the non-native smolts that have survived the harsh conditions of the tributaries only to find having to avoid a high density of predators in the open water environment. In mid-May 2024, a three-to-five-inch rainfall caused another blowout of the rivers which seems to have become the norm these days rather than the exception, adding to the unpredictability “climate chaos” has thrown our way and a reminder that the things we cannot control may have a bigger impact on populations than the things we can. A management agency can have the perfect trifecta of implementation of regulations, stocking, and habitat work but the five-month drought or four-inch rainfall can negate any positive impact these management actions might have had. The catch-and-release only regulation on wild steelhead has likely been the single greatest conservation tool for Minnesota steelhead; howev-

er, populations are again trending downwards due to forces beyond management control, highlighting the fact that we cannot rely solely on regulation if we want to maintain consistently fishable populations in the future and that an “all-of-the-above” management approach will likely be needed including an even greater reliance on the genetically screened wild Lake Superior strain Minnesota DNR has developed.

Over the coming winter of 2024-2025, Minnesota DNR will again meet with stakeholders and revise the 2016 Fisheries Management Plan for the Minnesota waters of Lake Superior making this the fourth edition of the plan and marking over 30 years of steelhead management guided by stakeholder input. Discussions around steelhead management will no doubt consist of those things that are out of our control and how, if possible, we can mitigate against the negative impacts to steelhead numbers. It amazes me how similar and how different steelhead management and conservation is between the West Coast and the Great Lakes, but the passion steelheaders have for this incredible fish is ubiquitous.



2024 Battle Creek Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Location
July	13	Portage Lake Panfish / Family Picnic	Portage Lake
August	3	Lake Michigan Memorial	South Haven
August	17	Veterans Outing	South Haven
October	26	Kalamazoo River Salmon Slam	Allegan Dam
November	9	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest	Allegan Dam
November	16	Kalamazoo River Memorial	Allegan Dam
November	30	St. Joe River Fall Steelhead	I-94 Boat Ramp
December	7	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	On the River Tavern
December	14	Christmas Party	Kalamazoo Eagles

Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting
Meeting Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94.
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
River Tournament - Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Lake Tournament - Dan Foster at 269-370-3693
battlecreeksteelheaders.com

2024 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
July	1	Board Meeting
July	25	Membership
July	27	Summer Challenge
August	5	Board Meeting
August	24	Ladies Tournament
August	27	League End
September	9	Board Meeting
September	10	League Dinner
October	1	Board Meeting
November	5	Board Meeting
December	3	Board Meeting
December	5	Membership

Board meetings held at: TBD Locations
 General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina
 Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow

For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jimmy Van Brocklin 616-240-7017 or email Brad Stephenson at brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

Board meetings held at: TBD Locations
 General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina
 Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow

For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jimmy Van Brocklin 616-240-7017 or email Brad Stephenson at brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

2024 Grand Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
TBD		GH/GR Chapter Challenge	
August 2-15		Weeklong Plus Contest	
August	15	Picnic	
September	7	Sportsman For Youth	
TBD		Christmas Party	

Other Events TBD

For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarm@gmail.com www.ghsteelheaders.com

2024 Grand Rapids Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
July	8	Chapter Family Picnic	Johnson Park
August	3	*Fall Big Lake Outing STC	
August		*Chapter Challenge / Double D Event	(stay tuned for dates)
August	26	Members Meeting	
September	14	Sportsman For Youth	Muskegon
September	30	Members Meeting	
October	1	Chapter Sponsored Buck Contest**	
October	*26	Fall River Contest STC	
October	28	Chapter Meeting	
November	3	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	
November	25	Chapter Meeting	
December	6	Christmas Party	Watch for details**

** Fishing Outings are subject to change based on weather conditions**

Events open to the public
 Meeting Location - Elks #48, 917 Bridge St NW, Grand Rapids
 Time: 6:00pm-7pm Social Hour with food and beverage followed by Speaker
 Board Meetings will take place after the regular Member Meeting
 Email Grand Rapids Steelheaders: fishgrsteelhead@gmail.com
 ** Fishing Outings are subject to change based on weather conditions**

New address:
 P.O. Box 140198
 Grand Rapids, MI 49514

2024 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Chair / Location
July	9	Club Summer Picnic	Mark Platt/Dave Zawacki
July	11	Erieau Tournament – Thursday	Erieau, Canada Clyde Schoen/C Christoph
July	13	Erieau Tournament – Friday	Erieau, Canada Henry Nabors/Ron Bellemore
July	13	Manistee River Cleanup Day @High Bridge	Roger Hinchcliff
July	25	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Thursday	Gale Frazee / Tom Abdelnour
July	27	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Saturday	Dave & Kim Zawacki
July	28	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Sunday	M & K Traver
August	6	General Membership Meeting	
August	10	Salmon Tournament - Saturday	Manistee - Henry Nabors / Dave Hutton
August	11	Salmon Tournament - Sunday	Manistee - Marc / Kirk Traver
August	17	Lake Tournament	Frankfort - Robert Grech / C Christoph
August	18	Salmon Tournament	Frankfort - Bill Dodge / C Christoph
August	24	PM Lake Kayak / Small Boat	Eric Braden
September	3	General Membership Meeting	
September	7	Manistee Kayak / SB & Pier Tournaments	Eric Braden
September	28	Manistee River Tournaments	Fabian Sepulveda
September	29	Muskegon Lake Salmon Campout Kayak / SB	Keith Childs
October	1	General Membership Meeting	
October	12	Lake Erie Perch Outing	Dave Zawacki
October	16	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2023 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/Trenz/Nabors/Zawacki
October	19	Ludington Pier / Beach Event	Eric Braden
November	2	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Zawacki/Braden/Trenz
November	12	General Membership Meeting - 2nd Tues.	Election Day Room at Senior Center #5
November	30	Ohio Walleye Tournament	Dave Zawacki
December	3	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	7	PM River Tournament	Marc Traver / Adam Trenz
December	14	Huron River Tournament	Roger Hinchcliff

** ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
 7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road
 WEB Site: Go to www.metroweststeelheaders.org
 If you have questions, contact **MetroWest Steelheaders, PO BOX 531927, Livonia MI 48153-1927**

Contact: *President* Bob Schulz, bobschulz7@gmail.com, 248-915-0043
Membership Director Henry Nabors 248-225-4964

2024 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
July	13	Manistee - Salmon
July	27	Ludington - Salmon
August	10	Ludington - Salmon (2 Day)
August	24	Manistee - Salmon (2 Day)
September	7	Manistee / Frankfort - Salmon T.B.D.
December	14	Banquet V.F.W. Midland

Membership meetings are the first Tuesday every month (no meeting in August)
 Meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 Phone: 989-496-3410

Board meetings begin at 7:00pm. **Please call the Port Chairman no later than Monday prior to the outing whether you plan on attending or not attending.** On the day of the outing, call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72.

Weigh-in follows each outing. Picnics follows weigh-in on Saturdays only.
 Outings: All Steelheader members pay \$5.00. All non-Steelheaders pay \$10.00 to participate.
 Children 16 and Under are free. Picnic is \$5.00 for everyone.

If interested in fishing with us please contact: Gary Decker at 989-859-7472
 Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com

2024 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
Note: SH Steelheaders (SHS) Chapter Events in BOLD * = Not Confirmed		
August	10	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival - August 8-11th)
August	17	SHS Operation Injured Soldier/SH Salute to Veterans
August	31	Labor Day Weekend
November	23	South Haven Steelheaders River Tournament
December		South Haven Steelheaders Holiday Party 2024

2024 South Haven Steelheaders Membership & Board Meeting Dates
 NO JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING
 FEB 15th – 3rd Thursday, Guest speaker – TBD
 MAR 21st – 3rd Thursday (week after GR Ultimate Sports Show, 3/7-10) – Best Chance Fishing Seminar
 APRIL 18th - 3rd Thursday – Southern Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop – Dr. Dan O’Keefe presenting
 MAY 16th – 3rd Thursday *prior to SHS Pro/Am – Membership meeting.
 JUNE 20th - 3rd Thursday
 JULY 18th - 3rd Thursday
 AUG 8th – 2nd Thursday – *Prior to the Annual Fish Boil
 SEP 19th - 3rd Thursday – Regular & Board meeting to prioritize & set next year’s events. ID event chairs.
 OCT 17th - 3rd Thursday –Regular and Board meeting to finalize next year’s events and set calendar
 NOV 7th – 1st Thursday – Regular and Board Meeting to finalize budget and calendar
 December – No meeting in lieu of Holiday Party
 The 2025 Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting is the 1st Wednesday of November (11/6/24)

Note: All Board and membership meetings are generally held the third Thursday of each month except for special circumstances such as Pro Am Captain’s Meeting set up in May, Fish Boil organizational meeting in August and prior to Deer Season in November.

Meeting Location: South Haven American Legion Post 49, 129 Michigan Avenue, South Haven, MI 49090
 Board Meetings start at 5:45pm and membership meetings at 7:00pm.
 For more information email: president@southhavensteelheaders.com

Join a Chapter, Join the Fun!

For more information,
 contact your Chapter Membership Director
 or mssfamembership@charter.net



2024 Southwest MI Steelheader's Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
Membership meetings and board meeting are held the second Thursday of each month but please confirm online for the most updated information. www.swmsteelheaders.com www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders			
July	27	Trolling with the Troops Fishing Event	
October	10	Quarterly Meeting - Fall Run Salmon and Steelhead	
December	7	Winter Challenge River Fishing Tournament	
Membership Meetings Held at: St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Elks 541, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022 Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM, Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM Contact: Jim Marohn 269-208-2784			

2024 Thumb Chapter Steelheader's Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
July	18	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ugly Foxhunters
October	17	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ugly Foxhunters
Contact Scott Stanke at 989-553-0972 for inquiries.				

2024 Thunderbay Steelheader's Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Information	
July	1	7:00pm	Alpena tournament	
August	5	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting	
August	23	7:00pm	Rogers City Tournament	
September	9	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting	
October	7	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting	
December	2	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting	
Contact Dan Bouchard at dan-bouchard@hotmail.com for inquiries.				

2024 White River Steelheader's Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event information	
Note: All meetings will be held at 6:30 pm at the VFW, any changes in location will be decided a couple of days before the meeting. - Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.				
July			No Meeting	
August	1	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW	
September	5	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW	
October	3	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW	
November	7	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW	
December	5	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW	



Photo credit: www.nature.org

“Protect”
Continued from page 12

phone numbers, contact MSSFA at 616-298-8842.

VOTE

But don't vote for just for anyone. Vote for candidates who care about our fishing, and who want to protect our waters and landscapes, and who are committed to addressing the climate threat while there's still time to do so. It's an election year and the single biggest thing we can do to protect our fisheries in 2024 is to vote for people who will fight for clean waters and healthy ecosys-

tems, and who will tackle climate change rather than settling for the status quo. Your vote matters. Please use it, and use it well.

There's one final thing I should mention before I wrap things up.

We don't always focus on how incredibly fortunate that we are here in the U.S. We have a long and storied history of stellar fishing and plentiful access on our abundant public waters. That kind of angling freedom is a blessing.

With that freedom, though, comes responsibility. It's our duty, both individually and collectively, to preserve and protect our fisheries for future genera-

tions. If we don't stand up now and address the myriad threats to our angling, the legacy we pass down to our children and grandchildren will be grim. Please do your part and help protect our rivers, streams, lakes and oceans in 2024.

In addition to running the nonprofit group Conservation Hawks, contributing frequently to Hatch Magazine, and teaching at the School of Trout, Todd Tanner has been writing about fly fishing, conservation and the outdoors for more than 3 decades.

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