Lake Michigan Fisheries Management and Habitat

We need alewives to get salmon

Biologist calls food fish key to loss of big lake salmon

By KURT MUELLER
Outdoor Editor

forage base, Coshun said, compared with only 3 percent for chubs and 9.4 percent smelt.

By 1987, the last good year of chinook salmon fishing on Lake Michigan, the forage base had completely turned around with up 85 percent of it, alewives 11 percent and smelt

sh stocking and catch statistics from the late 1980s sad story of the chinook collapse.

in, the chinook harvest of 1987 was the best ever inook in the sport catch.

the catch that year was supposed to be big me from the state's record stocking of three k salmon in Lake Michigan in 1984.

ocked almost as many chinook salmon in Lake ext year, 1985. And then, in 1988, the bottom fell et. Sport anglers caught only half as many fish in 1988 as they had in 1987

State reducing chinook salmon released into Lake Michigan

By Rob Karwath

In a show of concern about declining fishing conditions on Lake Michigan, state officials said Wednesday that they will sharply reduce the release of hatchery-raised chinook salmon and further limit the type and number of fish that may be caught.

The state Department of Conservation said it will reduce by nearly 25 percent the number of young chinook introduced into the lake starting next spring. It will not increase the release for five years.

And though the state will continue to allow fishermen to catch up to five fish a day, they will be limited to no more than two lake trout and no more than three of any other variety.

Fishermen currently may take up to five of any variety except lake trout. They are limited to three lake trout a day.

Conservation Director Brent Manning said his agency took both moves in response to concerns that fishing conditions have declined on Lake Michigan because of an imbalance in the food chain and because more people are fishing.

The three other Lake Michigan states—Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan—either have already taken similar moves or are considering doing so, Illinois officials said.

Officials are reducing the release of chinook because the fish have been too successful at eating alewives, the tiny fish that were washing up dead in large numbers in the late 1960s and fouling Chicago-area beaches. The alewives prompted the chinook introduction in 1969.

Chinooks' voracious appetite for alewives has thrown the lake's food chain out of balance. The depletion forced chinook to turn to bloater chubs and smelts for food and is linked to an outbreak of bacterial kidney disease in fish.

Fishermen and conservation experts speculate that chinook are being "stressed out" by the increasingly difficult search for alewives. This reduces their immune systems and makes them more vulnerable to the fatal kidney disease.

Fishermen and conservation groups applauded the state's actions and said they are long overdue.

"It was something that had to be done," said Jerry Pabst, past president of the Midwest Charter Association and a

ing out of Divers
we can bring bac
and keep the lake
all have better fishi

Pabst and other
daily catch restrict
some fishermen,
who like lake trout

"Sure, when yo
charter boat you
limit, but how ofte
do it?" said Cass
of Salmon Unlim
the Northwest Side

"I can live with
give our fish a b
survive."

The state will cu
lease of hatchery-
to 360,000 from 4

Chinook-release
the lake states hav
cessful that alewiv
only about 10 perc
for larger fish, do
than 75 percent in

Although the state will reduce the chinook release, it will maintain the current annual stocking of 100,000 lake trout, 100,000 rainbow trout, 100,000 brown trout and 300,000 coho salmon in the lake.

Chinooks' signals have DNRs worried over lake's balance

In the late 1980s, a stroller along Lake Michigan's shoreline almost always would pass

streams annually.

By 1986, the lake had obviously overreached its carrying capacity

on importing West Coast stock to the Great
mains in effect to prevent bringing any new
area.

n stocking, he said, must, in the future, involve
at border Lake Michigan, not only Wisconsin.

Fisheries Management

- recreational sport
- charter
- commercial

- trout and salmon
- yellow perch
- bloater chub
- bass, bluegill, rockbass

Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan & Strategy (CWCP)

Lake Michigan Key Actions

- No net loss habitat
- Prevent invasive species
- Restore lake trout

A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries

CORA

Wisconsin

Illinois

Indiana

Michigan

Great Lakes Fishery Commission

Minnesota

New York

Pennsylvania

Ontario

GLIFWC

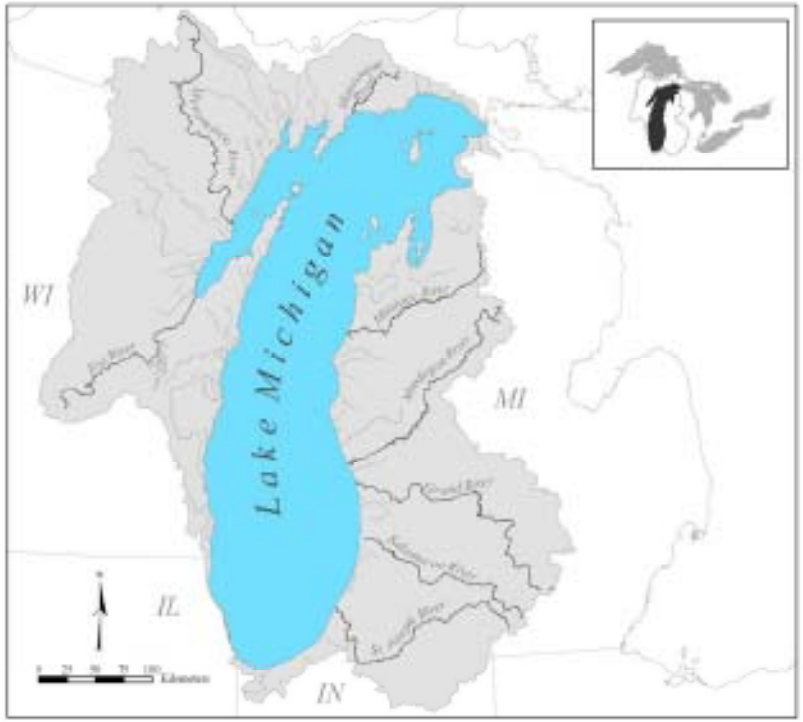
Ohio

- Salmonine objective
- Planktivore objective
- Inshore fish objective
- Benthivore objective
- Sea lamprey objective
- Other species objective
- Physical/chemical habitat objective

Physical/chemical habitat objective

- Protect and enhance and rehabilitate
- No net loss habitat with emphasis on historic riverine habitats
- Reduction and elimination of toxic chemicals

LAKE MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES



Edward Rutherford	University of Michigan
Emily Marshall	University of Michigan
David Clapp	Michigan Department of Natural Resources
William Horns	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Tom Gorenflo	Chippewa/Ottawa Resource Authority
Tom Trudeau	Illinois Department of Natural Resources

- Tributary areas
- Coastal wetlands
- Reefs
- Nearshore habitats
- Fish community
- Water quality

EO #1 – *Protecting and restoring connectivity and quality tributary spawning and nursery habitats*

- What impediments to achieving FCOs
- What available habitats and condition
- What impacted species
- Information and research needs

http://www.glfc.org/lakecom/lmc/lmenvironobj.pdf

Summary

- Each lake & state different
- Little natural shoreline interface
- Little information on offshore habitat
- Habitat modification difficult, $$$
- Lake Michigan very perturbed system
- Managed for naturalized species

http://www.fishhabitat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=44&Itemid=37

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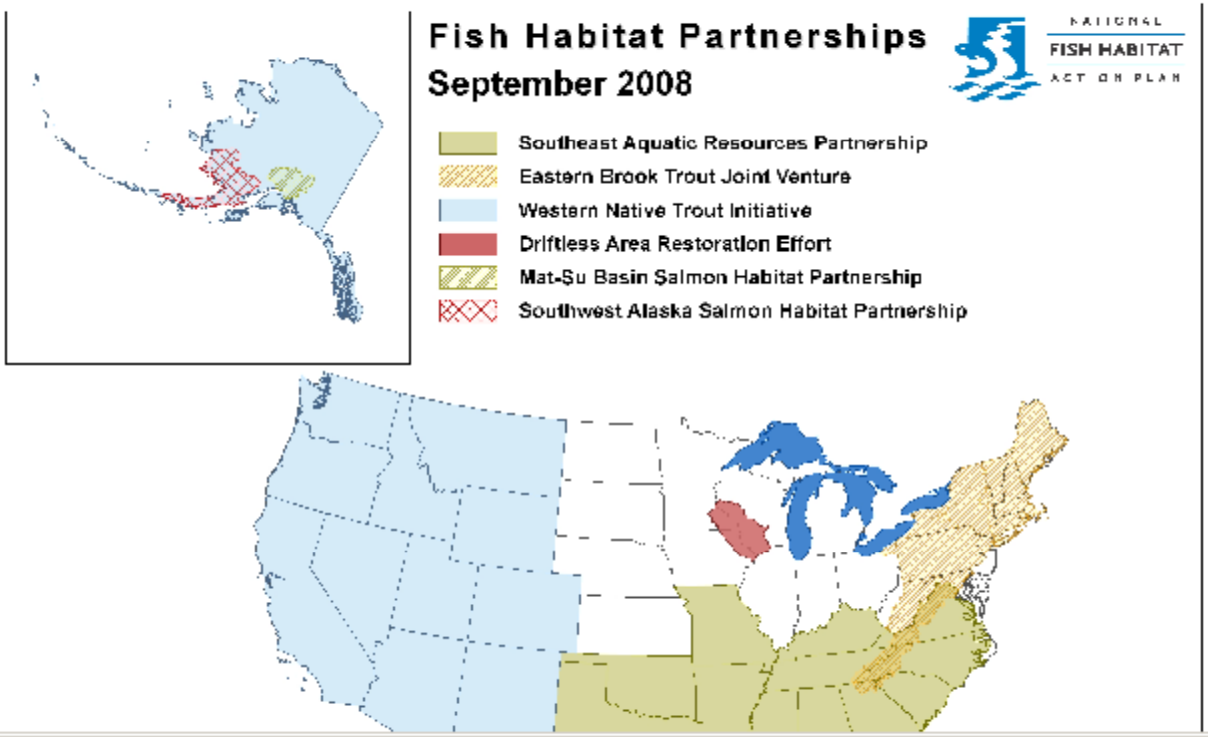
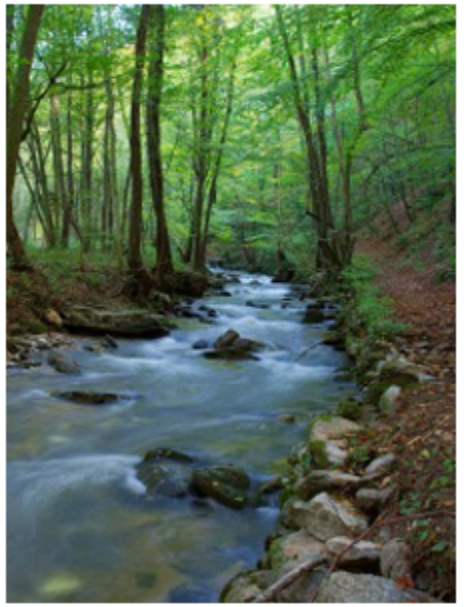
Fish Habitat Partnerships



NATIONAL FISH HABITAT ACTION PLAN



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