



Lake Erie Committee

REPRESENTING THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES OF LAKE ERIE AND LAKE ST. CLAIR

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Lake Erie Yellow Perch and Walleye Allowable Catches Set for 2006

WINDSOR, ON – Fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania—the five jurisdictions that manage the Lake Erie fishery—agreed to a total allowable catch (TAC) of 9.886 million fish for Lake Erie walleye and 16.48 million pounds of yellow perch for 2006. The group, meeting last week as the Lake Erie Committee, expressed satisfaction about recent successful rehabilitation efforts for walleye and the continued strength of the yellow perch stocks.

WALLEYE

Walleye stocks in Lake Erie have improved due in large measure to the very strong 2003 year class. The bulk of this year class will mature to a harvestable age in 2006, allowing the Committee to increase the TAC to 9.886 million fish. Using a sharing formula based on lake surface area proportions and known walleye habitat, Ohio will receive 51.4% of the TAC (or 5.081 million walleye), Ontario will receive 43.3% (4.281 million walleye), and Michigan will receive 5.3% (0.524 million walleye). The walleye fisheries of eastern Lake Erie remain outside the TAC considerations.

“The walleye spawning in 2003, which was the best walleye year class in more than 20 years, is primarily responsible for the improving strength of the walleye stocks in Lake Erie,” said Roger Knight of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Chair of the Lake Erie Committee.

Knight continued: “Walleye populations fluctuate from year to year. Our collective decision to increase harvest levels was highly dependent on spawning that occurred three seasons ago. Below average year classes in 2004 and 2005 will be continually monitored into the future. The Committee continues to be committed to implementing its Walleye Management Plan that promotes sustainable harvest.”

The Lake Erie Committee recently completed and published its Walleye Management Plan for Lake Erie, which guided the Committee’s decision-making process and helped the Committee to reach consensus on the walleye total TAC in Lake Erie for 2006. The plan is available online at www.glf.org/lakecom/lec/wmp20051207.doc.

YELLOW PERCH

Yellow perch populations in Lake Erie continued to be strong, allowing the Lake Erie Committee to increase the TAC to 16.48 million pounds of yellow perch in 2006. The five jurisdictions on the lake divide the lake-wide allocation of perch based on a sharing formula. Abundant hatches in 2001 and 2003 will contribute strongly to the fishery.

LAKE ERIE COMMITTEE

The Lake Erie Committee is made up of fishery managers representing Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania. The Committee’s work is facilitated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a Canadian and U.S. agency on the Great Lakes. Each year the Committee sets the TAC for walleye and yellow perch based on the best scientific advice from the agencies’ biologists and scientists. For more information, visit the Lake Erie Committee online at www.glf.org/lec.

