

Walleye Task Group:

1. Continue analyses supporting development and refinement of a multi-year harvest strategy and evaluate long-term effects of different management strategies on sustainability of walleye as part of the Coordinated Percid Management Strategy.
2. Maintain and update centralized time series required for population, including tagging, fishing harvest and effort by grid, growth rate, maturity schedule and agency or interagency abundance indices.
3. Assemble various data (harvest and effort, index fishing, tagging, etc.) for development of a spatially explicit database describing the Lake Erie walleye resource to search for evidence of stock discreteness and contributions to lakewide fisheries.
4. Develop catch-at-age analysis for Eastern Basin walleye in cooperation with studies underway by Pat Sullivan, Ed Rutherford, and Brian Shuter.
5. Examine spawning stock biomass trends and develop biological reference points as part of the decision analysis process. Address alternate yield methods other than Fopt , yield-per-recruit that may need to be implemented after the current CPMS.

Co-Chairs: **Bruce Morrison (OMNR) and Mike Thomas (MDNR)**

Other Members: **Don Einhouse (NYSDEC), Bob Haas (MDNR), Tim Johnson (OMNR),
Roger Kenyon (PFBC), Roger Knight (ODNR), , Don MacLennan
(OMNR), Phil Ryan (OMNR), and Mark Turner (ODW).**

2002-03 Charges

Yellow Perch Task Group:

1. Maintain and update the centralized time series of data sets required for population models and to monitor the dynamics of yellow perch stocks including fishing effort, harvest, growth, maturity, recruitment, index, spawning stock biomass, and fecundity data.
2. Contribute to lakewide genetic research on Lake Erie yellow perch stocks.
3. Consider a long-term harvest strategy and define an appropriate fishing exploitation policy that leads to producing a conservative RAH range in 2002 for each management unit that promotes sustainability of Lake Erie yellow perch stocks as part of the Coordinated Percid Management Strategy.
4. Examine MU4 sub-population and explore whether there is support for re-defining boundaries within MU4 to manage as separate stocks.

Co-Chairs: **Andy Cook (OMNR) and Roger Kenyon (PFBC).**

Other Members: **Don Einhouse (NYSDEC), Kevin Kayle (ODNR), Carey Knight (ODNR),
Brian Locke (OMNR), Bruce Morrison (OMNR), Phil Ryan (OMNR), Bob
Sutherland (OMNR), and Mike Thomas (MDNR).**

2002-03 Charges

Forage Task Group:

1. Continue to describe the status and trends of forage fish species and invertebrates in 2001 for each basin of Lake Erie.
2. Continue the development of an experimental design to facilitate forage fish assessment and standardized interagency reporting.
3. Continue the fisheries acoustics program to assess pelagic forage fish stocks in the eastern basin. Continue pilot survey investigations using the Lake Erie acoustic system in the central and western basins of Lake Erie.
4. Continue the interagency lower-trophics monitoring program that produces annual indices of trophic conditions which can be included with the FTG's annual description of forage status.
5. Identify efficient sampling design from research done in association with Lars Rutsdam and Cornell U., and apply.
6. Extend survey to include inshore waters that provide forage for top predators, to extent feasible using acoustic gear (additional transects, extend transects).

Co-Chairs: **John Deller (ODNR) and Betsy Trometer (USFWS).**

Other Members: **Mike Bur (USGS), Luca Cargnelli (OMNR), Don Einhouse (NYSDEC), Bob Haas (MDNR), Tim Johnson (OMNR), Jim Markham (NYSDEC), Chuck Murray (PFBC), Lars Rudstam (Cornell U.), Jeff Tyson (ODNR), and Larry Witzel (OMNR).**

2002-03 Charges

Coldwater Task Group:

1. Coordinate annual standardized lake trout assessment among all eastern basin agencies and report upon the status of lake trout rehabilitation.
2. Continue to assess the whitefish and burbot population age structure, growth, diet, seasonal distribution and other population parameters.
3. Continue to participate in the IMSL process on Lake Erie to outline and prescribe the needs of the Lake Erie sea lamprey management program.
4. Maintain an annual interagency electronic database of Lake Erie salmonid stocking and current projections for the STC, GLFC and Lake Erie agency data depositories.
5. Report on the status of rainbow trout in Lake Erie, including stocking numbers, strains being stocked, academic and resource agency research interests, and related population parameters, including growth, diet and exploitation.
6. Monitor current status of Lake Herring. Review ecology and history of this species and assess potential for recovery.
7. Improve description of diet for cold-water top predators.

Co-Chairs: **Martin Stapanian (USGS) and Phil Ryan (OMNR).**

Other Members: **Mike Bur (USGS), Andy Cook (OMNR), John Fitzsimons (DFO), Jim Francis (MDNR), John Heinrich (USFWS), Kevin Kayle (ODNR), Brian Locke (OMNR), Jim Markham, (NYSDEC), Chuck Murray (PFBC), Paul Sullivan (DFO), and Elizabeth Trometer (USFWS).**

[This committee will be tabled during 2002-03 so no Charges need consideration]

Community Assessment Task Group:

(2001-2002 charges not yet addressed)

1. Inventory the gill-net surveys being conducted on Lake Erie that may provide community information, summarize problems and issues, collect and summarize data that is used to convert data between surveys (i.e. multi:mono ratios).
2. Develop a strategy (similar gear, correction factors etc.), to allow agencies to combine data and produce descriptions of population and community characteristics. Develop a database strategy (format, summary strategy etc).
3. Identify useful products from the combined databases eg GM for age for perch, CPUE trends for YOY, YAO shad, total fish biomass and size spectrum, biodiversity measures; develop strategy for annual reporting. Produce a report to summarize protocol, agreements, strategies etc.

Chairman: **Andy Cook.**

Other Members: **representatives of NYSDEC, PFBC, ODNR, and MDNR, as needed.**

2002-03 Charges

Habitat Task Group:

1. Document habitat related projects (e.g. critical information collection, habitat rehabilitation projects, habitat quantification, etc.) being conducted or proposed by LEC agency members and partners in the Lake Erie Basin.
2. Develop strategy to work with Lake Erie LaMP as vehicle to resolve environmental issues etc beyond mandates of fisheries agencies.

Chair: **Phil Ryan [or new employee] (OMNR).**

Other members: **Bob Haas (MDNR), Roger Kenyon (PFBC) Jim Markham (NYS DEC), and Jeff Tyson (ODNR).**

Lake Erie Committee

July 2, 2002

Decision Points

Meeting format: Teleconference, 2:00 PM

Present: Bill Culligan (NY), Rick Hoopes (Penn), Roger Knight (Ohio), Phil Ryan (Ont) [for Mike Morencie], and Gary Towns, chair (Mich).

Yellow Perch Sharing Formula - The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss and arrive at a final yellow perch sharing formula transition schedule. This will complete the process which began over a decade ago to transcend from a sharing agreement between jurisdictions which included elements of historical harvest – toward one based on jurisdictional surface area within yellow perch management units. Ontario presented a proposal a few months prior to this discussion and email was used to comment and modify. Consensus was reached on the following items during this meeting:

- Walleye issues would not be considered with discussions regarding the yellow perch sharing formula.
- Yellow Perch Management Units 1 & 4 will reach full area-share in 2 years and Mgt. Units 2 & 3 will reach area-share in 3 years (see schedule below).
- There are no conditions linked to the area-share agreement.
- There will be no “frozen TACs” or penalties during this final transition phase - each jurisdiction is expected to continue to responsibly manage its fishery - as per previous years.

Yellow perch transition from 3/4-point to full area share in Lake Erie during the years: 2003-2005.

MU	Agency	2002 3/4-Point	2003	2004 Full Area – MU 1 & 4	2005 Full Area – all MUs
Unit 1	MI	7.0%	7.6%	8.1%	8.1%
	OH	47.3%	48.4%	49.6%	49.6%
	ONT	45.7%	44.0%	42.3%	42.3%
Unit 2	OH	48.6%	51.6%	54.5%	57.5%
	ONT	51.4%	48.4%	45.5%	42.5%
Unit 3	OH	28.4%	29.6%	30.7%	31.9%
	PA	10.9%	11.2%	11.6%	11.9%
	ONT	60.7%	59.2%	57.6%	56.1%
Unit 4	NY	24.0%	25.8%	27.6%	27.6%
	PA	14.9%	16.1%	17.2%	17.2%
	ONT	61.1%	58.1%	55.2%	55.2%

New STC Assignments - The STC will be assigned some new charges to be completed by March 2004. These include:

- Re-calculation of surface areas (using GIS) used for yellow perch and walleye sharing formulas.
- Review and document the rationale for international sharing of yellow perch and walleye. The result will be a document of record for the LEC and GLFC.
- Rationale for including/excluding areas from the sharing process (such as Rondeau Bay, Inner Long Point Bay, Sandusky Harbor, etc.) needs to be reviewed. STC to advise LEC with documented suggestions. LEC will discuss and finalize.
- Review the history of how Michigan's walleye TAC is derived....is Michigan's share actually part of the TAC for Ohio and Ontario?

Fish Kills/Botulism – NY, Penn and Ohio are all reporting fish kills (and dead mudpuppies). Samples from NY have been collected and sent to a lab for analysis. Bill Culligan will draft a list of information contacts for LEC members to use when responding to the media, etc. We need information on more labs which can process botulism samples. All members are encouraged to contribute to this list and will pass along any current information as it develops.

Lake Erie Environmental Objectives – A document with Lake Erie Draft Environmental Objectives was submitted to the LEC in March, 1999. This was recently reviewed by LEC members and all agreed that this was a workable document. Phil Ryan will take the lead to reassemble the Habitat Group and revisit this document – to update and add some specificity.

Lake Erie Fish Community Goals and Objectives – this document has been edited once again by the GLFC and has been returned to Phil Ryan for a final draft. We have been assured that this is the last phase in getting this in final form. Phil reported that Ontario has recently hired some staff which should free some time for him to revisit the FCGO and finalize them.

Meeting concluded at 3:00 PM.