



**Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



RESOLUTION #4: RUFFE

Whereas European ruffe were introduced into the Great Lakes at Duluth Harbor, Lake Superior, through ballast water from the shipping industry in about 1988; and

Whereas a relatively large ruffe population has been established since 1988 in the Duluth area and has spread east along the south shore of Lake Superior to the Ontonagon River; and

Whereas ruffe may be impacting resident fisheries for walleye, perch, northern pike, etc. in the Duluth area; and

Whereas shipping has again apparently spread ruffe to the mouth of the Thunder Bay River on Lake Huron in 1995; and

Whereas recent studies show the ruffe population to be reproducing in the Thunder Bay River and harbor; and

Whereas the spread of ruffe is eminent to other areas of the lower lakes where it could possibly cause impacts to native and naturalized fish stocks in both the Great Lakes and inland waters; and

Where as state agencies have banned the possession of live ruffe, the commercial bait industry is being closely monitored and closed in some areas to prevent the further spread of ruffe; and

Whereas the Nuisance Aquatic Species Task Force and the Ruffe Control Committee have developed and implemented plans to further slow the spread of ruffe; and

Whereas alternate ballast water control technologies are being developed and tested to eliminate nuisance aquatic species from the ballast water systems of existing ships; and

Whereas owners and operators of vessels, in the domestic and international trade on the Great Lakes, recognize their role in assisting in the control of the spread of non-indigenous species;

RESOLVE: The U.S. Committee of Advisors to the Great lakes Fishery Commission urges the GLFC to adopt the following position:

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Supports the development of control by the U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards on the introduction of nuisance aquatic species into the Great Lakes ecosystem via international commerce.

Ask the Lake Carriers Association, Canadian Ship owners Association, Duluth and Thunder Bay Harbor authorities, Shipping Federation of Canada and all other lake carriers to abide by the 1997 and subsequent voluntary ballast water management plans for the control of ruffe in Lake Superior ports;

Strongly urges the Great Lakes Maritime industry to strictly adhere to the voluntary ballast water management plan developed for the control of ruffe in Alpena, Michigan for 1997 and subsequent years with the following considerations:

1. Ballast sea chest suction screens be verified to be in place prior to taking on ballast water in Alpena, Michigan.
2. Prior to ballasting vessels in Alpena, every effort should be made to lighten vessels and much as practical at the dock to have the ballast intake as high in the water as possible. This will result in all water and potential fish to be processed through high-speed pump impellers.
3. Ballast water be pumped in to the tanks in Alpena rather than run in by gravity whenever possible (see #2 above).
4. When ballast water is removed from vessel tanks, it should be pumped out rather than gravity drained as in #2 above.
5. Ballast water taken aboard at Alpena should only be the minimum quantity needed for departure as directed by the vessel Master with full consideration for the safety of the crew and vessel.
6. Ballast water taken aboard at Alpena should be exchanged if the Master determines hull stress and weather conditions permit. Exchange should take place as far from shore as possible and in deep water.
7. Deep water exchange is proffered, but if that is not possible due to vessel routing, safety or weather conditions, a ballast exchange in Thunder Bay, just outside Alpena, is recommended to prevent any fish from being transferred to a new location.

Submitted by Charles Pistis

Seconded by Dick Reuss

Passed

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