



Lake Erie Committee

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

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Lake Erie Committee Releases Updated Lake Erie Walleye Management Plan

Ann Arbor, MI – Fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania—the five jurisdictions that manage the Lake Erie fishery—today released an updated walleye management plan for Lake Erie. The plan, which is an update of the original plan of 2005, sets new fishery goals and objectives for walleye (also known as pickerel), one of Lake Erie’s most important commercial and recreational species. The plan is the result of extensive stakeholder and manager input through a process known as the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, or LEPMAG. The plan is available at: http://www.glfsc.org/lakecom/lec/LEC_docs/position_statements/walleye_management_plan.pdf.

The Lake Erie Walleye Management Plan provides a brief history of walleye management in Lake Erie and reports on the status of the species. The plan also defines key reference points and harvest control rules to be used by the Lake Erie Committee to establish an annual total allowable catch recommendation, or “TAC.” The overall goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the walleye fishery on Lake Erie. The plan and objectives were developed through the LEPMAG process and represent the consensus of commercial and recreational fishers and management agencies.

The LEC created LEPMAG to provide advice from all stakeholders based on their stated objectives and common evaluation of alternative exploitation policies. The LEC took this advice from LEPMAG into account in developing this plan, while also accounting for the sustainability of the resource.

In Lake Erie, walleye are managed under a quota-setting process that takes into account natural fluctuations of fish stocks and the socio-economic needs of the five state and provincial jurisdictions that share the lake. Lake Erie walleye are managed as common fish stocks, and the jurisdictions, through management and technical committees, meet on a regular basis to understand the state of walleye in the lake, to share science and data, and to reach consensus on a TAC. The individual jurisdictions are free to allocate their fishery as they see fit, pursuant to the TAC. Ontario allocates most of its portion of the TAC to the commercial fishery while American states allocate their portion to the recreational fishery.

The TAC-setting process occurs through a bi-national forum called the Lake Erie Committee, which operates under the Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries as facilitated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. This process has evolved over the years to include robust discussions among the management agencies and to incorporate stakeholder goals and needs into the decision-making process. LEPMAG, which was initiated in 2010, is the primary way managers and stakeholders meet to discuss walleye management on a bi-national level. Michigan State University’s Quantitative Fisheries Center supports the LEPMAG process and biologists from all jurisdictions provide key information to ground decisions.

Said Lake Erie chair Jeff Tyson of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources: “The Lake Erie Committee and representatives of LEPMAG have worked extensively together over the previous several years to develop Lake Erie walleye harvest strategies that recognize the importance of sustainability and socio-economic impacts. The Walleye Management Plan is the culmination of this collaborative work and institutionalizes the commitment of the Lake Erie Committee to work with stakeholders to sustainably manage the shared Lake Erie walleye resource for the benefit of multiple jurisdictions and fisheries.” --30--