



**Lake Erie
Committee**

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Lake Erie Committee Sets Walleye and Yellow Perch Total Allowable Catches for 2024

Bay City, MI—The binational Lake Erie Committee (LEC), composed of fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania—the five jurisdictions that manage the Lake Erie fishery—set total allowable catches (TACs) for 2024 of 12.858 million walleye and 6.554 million pounds of yellow perch. Yellow perch are allocated in pounds and walleye are allocated by number of fish. These TACs represent a slight decrease in walleye from 13.526 million fish and a very small decrease for yellow perch from 6.573 million pounds of fish last year. Specific allocations of both species are presented below by jurisdiction.

TAC decisions are made by consensus of the LEC after extensive, lakewide biological assessments, analyses, discussions, and consultations with stakeholders. Scientists and field biologists from all jurisdictions meet annually and on an ongoing basis to analyze fisheries and agency data to estimate population levels and recommend the annual TAC. These decisions are reflective of the status of Lake Erie’s fish populations and consider the goal of maintaining sustainable harvest each year by implementing harvest policies included in species-specific management plans. The individual state and provincial governments implement the TAC in their jurisdiction in accordance with their respective regulations and management objectives.

WALLEYE: Guided by the Walleye Management Plan and advice from Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group (LEPMAG), the LEC set a 2024 lakewide walleye TAC of 12.858 million fish, a 4.9% decrease from the 2023 TAC of 13.526 million fish. Overall, the LEC believes that the walleye population remains strong following numerous years of successful hatches; however, a slight reduction in modeled abundance compared to 2023 resulted in a decrease in TAC. Walleye average size will increase in 2024 resulting in a smaller decline in harvested biomass compared to the decline in number of fish. The Province of Ontario and the states of Ohio and Michigan share the TAC based on the amount of walleye habitat within each jurisdiction in the western and central basins of the lake. Under a 2024 TAC of 12.858 million fish, Ohio will be entitled to 6.572 million fish, Ontario 5.536 million fish, and Michigan 0.750 million fish. Jurisdictions in eastern Lake Erie are outside of the TAC area, but harvest limits are set consistent with lakewide objectives.

YELLOW PERCH: LEC yellow perch TAC decisions are the result management plan implementation and advice from scientists and stakeholders through the LEPMAG. The LEC set a 2024 combined TAC of 6.554 million pounds of yellow perch, a 0.3% decrease from the 2023 TAC of 6.573 million pounds of fish.

The yellow perch fishery is divided into four management units, which generally correspond to the eastern, east-central, west-central, and western basins of Lake Erie. Poor recruitment of yellow perch in the central basin (management units 2 and 3) continues to be a challenge, although the population is showing signs of stabilizing in management unit 2. Managing yellow perch populations presents unique challenges, but the LEC strives to maintain sustainable harvest while

REPRESENTING THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES OF LAKE ERIE

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responding to changing population trajectories influenced by dynamic environmental conditions. LEC is participating in various research efforts to better understand the yellow perch recruitment challenges in Lake Erie's central basin.

The five jurisdictions on the lake share Lake Erie’s yellow perch under a surface area-based formula. Pursuant to the 2024 TAC, Ontario will receive 3.082 million pounds, Ohio 2.609 million pounds, Michigan 0.260 million pounds, New York 0.145 million pounds, and Pennsylvania 0.458 million pounds. As with walleye, each Lake Erie jurisdiction is responsible for allocating its portion of the TAC.

THE LAKE ERIE PERCID MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP (LEPMAG): Since 2010, the LEPMAG has served as the primary method to incorporate stakeholder needs and objectives into the decision-making process regarding walleye and yellow perch harvest. The LEPMAG consists of senior representatives from all provincial and state jurisdictions on the lake, recreational fishers, commercial fishers, and other interested organizations. Through the LEPMAG, fishery managers and stakeholders work together to identify the harvest policies for Lake Erie percid that meet the needs of all stakeholders while maintaining stability in the percid fishery. Michigan State University’s Quantitative Fisheries Center facilitates the LEPMAG process. Walleye are managed under the Walleye Management Plan, which was developed through the LEPMAG and formally adopted by the LEC in 2015. The LEPMAG is advising the LEC as it seeks to update both the walleye and yellow perch management plans in the coming years.

THE LAKE ERIE COMMITTEE (LEC) AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCHES (TACs): The LEC’s work is facilitated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a Canada and U.S. treaty organization. Each year the committee reaches consensus on TAC decisions for walleye and yellow perch. The TAC represents what the committee considers to be a sustainable level of harvest, as guided by recommendations from the Yellow Perch and Walleye Task groups while implementing species specific management plans. The individual agencies allocate the TAC through setting commercial fishing quotas and recreational fishing daily limits intended to maintain annual harvest levels within the TAC.

The table below reflects the distribution of the 2024 yellow perch TAC within each management unit for each agency. Units are expressed in millions of pounds.

Management Unit	Agency	2024 TAC
1	Ontario	1.162
	Michigan	0.260
	Ohio	1.439
	Total	2.861
2	Ontario	0.261
	Ohio	0.311
	Total	0.572
3	Ontario	1.388
	Ohio	0.860
	Pennsylvania	0.406
	Total	2.654
4	Ontario	0.271
	Pennsylvania	0.051
	New York	0.145
	Total	0.467
	Lakewide	6.554

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