

THE GLQO WATERSHED JOURNAL

The Gull Lake Watershed includes Gull Lake, Little Long Lake, Grassy Lake, Little Gull Lake, Miller Lake, Bullhead Lake, Duck Lake, Backus Lake, Dake Lake, Elliston Lake, Mud Lake, Wintergreen Lake, and Prairieville Creek.



Prairieville Township Plans New Ramp

After three decades of use and over 100,000 boat launchings, it's time to replace the boat ramp at Prairieville Township Park on Gull Lake. Next summer, boaters will enjoy a safe new ramp with improved dockage. This, is all thanks to the Prairieville Township Parks Commission.

Dave Flook, Owner, Flook Construction Solutions, LLC is overseeing the project and serves as the owner's representative. They are working with a design firm, Edgewater Resources from St Joseph, Michigan. Edgewater Resources specializes in marina, seawall and boat ramp type construction. They are very knowledgeable about state and federal regulations related to these types of projects.

The final product will be 10 feet wider and 12 feet longer than the existing ramp. Two new docks will be provided which will also be 10 feet longer than the existing docks. They will be a similar skid type design.

To date:

- ✓ The plans are nearly complete, and we have received preliminary approval from the MDNR. Final plan review and approval from the MDNR is still pending.
- ✓ We have received approval from the MDEQ.
- ✓ The engineer's cost estimate is approximately \$250,000.
- ✓ Prairieville Township has acquired a MDNR grant for reimbursement for up to 50% of the total cost of design and construction.
- ✓ We expect to bid the project out in late January and early February and award the work in March.
- ✓ The project plan requires that a cofferdam or similar structure be built around the area of new ramp before the existing ramp is removed. The water will be drained from the entire work area. Then the existing

ramps will be removed. The sub grade will be adjusted and new precast ramp planks will be installed. Once this is complete and deemed acceptable by Prairieville Township and the MDNR, the water will be let back in and the cofferdam removed.

All in time for your spring launch!
(Review the drawing on page 3.)

Thanks to Dave for this update on the progress of the project! Dave Flook's experience includes serving as owner's representative for Gull Lake School System since 2004 including the new \$65 million bond program. Dave served as the general contractor during the construction of the boat wash, as well.

WINTER 2019

In This Issue:

New Ramp Planned	1
Fisheries Update	2
Become a Purple Martin Landlord	3
GLQO Board Notes and Updates.	5
Get Your Purple Martin Colony Started	7
Zebra Mussel Watch	8
Appreciating GLQO Members.	10

The Gull Lake Quality Organization is an all-volunteer organization. Our mission is to address concerns and provide education regarding the use of natural resources of the Gull Lake Watershed.

Fisheries Update

By Bryan Beck, Fisheries Committee

Winter Creel Survey

The DNR and the GLQO are working together to gather valuable information from ice fishermen this season. You can find a Volunteer Fisheries Survey Form on the GLQO website, at Ned's, or at Beer and Skittles, which we are hopeful will be completed, even if you come up empty handed! The information gathered will help to (a) identify if any smelt are being caught, (b) determine if the steelhead are beginning to recruit to the fishery, and (c) gather information on lake trout and northern pike size and harvest.

(Pictured right is a fishing creel.)



Pike Fin Testing

As previously reported, the DNR is examining cross-sections of fin rays under a microscope to determine the ages of individual pike in Gull Lake. Once the size and age of each fish is known, comparisons can be made regarding growth rates of Gull Lake pike relative to statewide averages and lengths-at-age for other southwest Michigan pike populations. The DNR has reported back to the GLQO that they are grateful for the anglers who have submitted pike spines to aid in the growth evaluation. As of the beginning of January, they had received a total of 70 spines from fish ranging from 12 to 31 inches. Similar to angler reports, most fish were in the 22 to 25 inch range. This is not uncommon for northern pike as numbers can drop off once they reach legal size and are subjected to harvest. The DNR has begun the process of sectioning and polishing the spines and will determine the age of each fish. They will calculate mean length at age and compare the growth to other populations in the area. If growth is below average, there is most likely too much competition for prey. If growth is average, harvest is most likely high resulting in fewer large fish. This is an important study as potential regulation or management changes could be made based on these results and input from anglers.

Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

PFAS are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s. They are not naturally occurring, but are widespread in the environment and are found in people, wildlife, and fish all over the world. Some PFAS do not break down easily in the environment and most people in the United States have at least one type of PFAS in their bloodstream. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) collected fish on Gull Lake this past fall for tissue sampling, however, results have not been released. In any case, we note that Gull Lake currently has a consumption advisory for mercury that suggests a monthly limit of 1 serving of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and northern pike.

Smelt

One comment that we've heard recently regarding Gull Lake smelt is whether it makes any sense to attempt to introduce ciscoes in lieu of smelt or to re-introduce both fish species. It appears as though the literature is mixed regarding the relationship between smelt and ciscoes. Ciscoes are native to Gull Lake and many other lakes in southwest Michigan and currently are listed as a state threatened species. Some authors have attributed past declines in native cisco populations to competition and predation (on juveniles) by introduced smelt. However, there are lakes in northern Michigan where the two species co-exist.

Continued on Page 6

Purple Martin

Continued from Page 3

true (martins are active during the day and mosquitos are active after dusk) they do eat a lot of bugs including flying ants, midges, flies and even stinkbugs (yeah!).

Purple martins are among a group of birds known as Neotropical migrants. They migrate up to 5000 miles each year from their summer breeding grounds in the US and Canada to their winter homes in South America (mostly in the Amazon basin of Brazil). We tend to think of the 300+ species of Neotropical migrants (such as hummingbirds, orioles, and warblers) as "our birds" that leave their homes to "go south" in the winter. In fact, research shows that many species (such as the purple martin) originated in South America and gradually evolved to migrate to North America to take advantage of long summer days that provide abundant food. Not only is the purple martin's migratory distance impressive, but so is its regular timing. If you put up a purple martin house you will find that their comings and goings run like clockwork. Below is a six-year log of purple martin arrivals and departures from our house on Little Long Lake.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Arrive</u>	<u>Depart</u>
2013	April 18	August 7
2014	April 13	August 6
2015	April 16	August 4
2016	April 14	August 5
2017	April 22	August 6
2018	April 19	August 5-8

How these small birds with their little "bird brains" manage to leave Brazil and arrive at our house around the 15th of April each year is a wonder.

Purple martins nest colonially and east of the Rockies they are completely dependent on human-provided housing. That's why they need you! Even before Europeans arrived, Native Americans hung gourds that provided homes for these cavity nesters. Older birds ("scouts") are the first to arrive in the spring (you can track and report scout sightings on a website maintained by the Purple Martin Conservation Association: <https://www.purplemartin.org/research/8/scout-arrival-study/>). Martins are loyal to their homes and once they have bred successfully at a specific location, the same individuals return year after year. Purple martins have one brood per year and both adults feed and care for the nestlings, capturing insects on the fly and bringing them back to the nest. The young fledge (leave the nest) about a month after hatching and remain dependent upon their parents for another week or two. Then, in what still seems like the heart of summer in southern Michigan (early August), purple martins begin to make their way south. Along the way they roost in large flocks of hundreds or even thousands of birds at various sites in the southern US before making their way to South America.

The accompanying article (page 7) tells how you can become a purple martin landlord. It's easy to get started with a simple purple martin house and if you like watching birds, I promise you that you'll find these birds among the most interesting you've ever known. If you have questions, feel free to e-mail me at mittelbach@kbs.msu.edu. There is also a great deal of information available on the internet, especially from the Purple Martin Conservation Association (<https://www.purplemartin.org/>) and the Michigan Audubon Society (<https://www.michiganaudubon.org/bfc/puma/>) which includes a map of purple martin colonies in Michigan (you can register yours).

GLQO Board Notes and Updates

Boater Safety and Ice Safety

Did you know records of ice freeze and thaw dates on Gull Lake have been kept since the 1920's? (See page 8.) This is recent data about freeze dates. Be safe out there!

2013	12/17/12
2014	1/8/14
2015	1/19/15
2016	1/19/16
2017	1/6/17
2018	12/27/17
2019	1/14/19



Watch for thin ice!

Did you know that boaters are responsible for their wakes? In fact, insurance claims related to wake related accidents have risen. According to Michigan law, boaters should observe "Slow – no wake speed within **100 feet** of the shoreline, any watercraft, pier, person, raft, swimming area, and swimmers."

Did you know that Michigan law regulates the noise level of boats? "Motorboats are required to have mufflers or an underwater exhaust system such that it does not produce sound levels in excess of 90 dB when subjected to a stationary (neutral) sound level test of its engine at no closer than one meter (3.3 feet)." Some townships also have ordinances regarding the noise level of electronic sound producing devices in boats that create unreasonable loud noise. The marine patrol did provide several warnings this past year and issued 8 citations.

Membership

The 2019 membership appeal reminders were mailed in December. The listing provided in the newsletter includes those members whose forms were received as of January 15. If you haven't had the opportunity to renew, you can do so online at glqo.net/join or we will be sending a reminder to you in the spring. This year, we are also offering the chance to sign up for the Riparian Magazine. This is a \$25 value for only \$14 for GLQO members. Every effort is made to list your names as you request on the membership form. As well as, to not list those who have requested to remain anonymous. Any updates or corrections may be emailed to info@glqo.net. Thank you! It is through your support and membership dues that we continue to monitor the lakes and respond quickly to threats and keep you informed.

Water Quality

The following is an excerpt from the final report from Progressive AE's aquatic vegetation study. "Study findings indicate that Gull Lake contains a good diversity of beneficial native aquatic plants. However, small infestations of the exotic plants Eurasian milfoil and starry stonewort were found in the lake during the course of study. While the Gull Lake Quality Organization has initiated spot-treatment with aquatic herbicides to prevent the spread of these starry stonewort plants, a sustained program may be required to manage these species in the lake over the long term. To be effective, a nuisance plant control program of this nature will likely require a secure source of financing. The program should include annual aquatic vegetation surveys to determine the extent of nuisance aquatic plant infestations, and periodic spot-treatments by a licensed professional herbicide applicator or other control measures to help prevent the spread of exotic plants in Gull Lake."

Fisheries Update

Continued from Page 2

It is possible that they could co-exist in Gull Lake. According to the DNR, restoration of either species would be challenging as neither smelt nor ciscoes are customarily reared in state hatcheries. There has been some experimentation with cisco rearing at DNR hatcheries but none are currently available. Because smelt and ciscoes occupy a similar niche and substantial effort would be expended to reestablish either population, it is highly unlikely that both species would be stocked in Gull Lake. Both smelt and ciscoes are regarded as excellent table fare for humans and are valuable forage for northern pike and lake trout. The following are pros and cons to stocking each species.

Smelt

- Pros: (1) Anglers are accustomed to catching smelt in Gull Lake.
(2) There are no other smelt populations in southwest Michigan, so Gull Lake has been providing a unique fishery.
- Cons: (1) It is a challenge to find smelt egg sources and there is some apprehension among state biologists regarding the effects of an egg take on the source populations.
(2) The smelt population in Gull Lake has already crashed twice. If smelt are brought back, will they just crash again?
(3) Smelt are not native to Michigan.
(4) Although smelt are delicious, it takes a lot of smelt to make a meal.

Ciscoes

- Pros: (1) Ciscoes are native to Gull Lake.
(2) Restoring a cisco population in Gull Lake would coincide with the DNR's goal of moving ciscoes from threatened to special concern status.
(3) Fishing for ciscoes is increasing in popularity in northern Michigan where cisco populations are rebounding.
(4) Sampling conducted in Gull Lake in August 2013 indicated that summer water temperatures and dissolved oxygen levels are suitable for ciscoes.
(5) There are cisco populations in southwest Michigan that would be potential sources for egg or adult transfers to Gull Lake.
- Cons: (1) Ciscoes have been gone from Gull Lake for about 60 years, and local anglers are not used to targeting this species.
(2) Ciscoes already were extirpated from Gull Lake in the 1950's. The cisco disappearance may be less unnerving than the smelt crash because water quality was worse in the 1950s when Gull Lake lost the ciscoes. The smelt crashed when the water quality was relatively good.
(3) Although there are potential local sources for cisco stocking, we understand from the DNR that there are still some steps to negotiate (e.g., disease testing, invasive species concerns, and sampling logistics) before any transfers could be completed.

A final note regarding the smelt, we understand that the DNR is looking at options for evaluating the smelt run in Prairieville Creek this spring. In 2018, the DNR relied solely on visual observations of spawning fish, which required numerous trips to the creek. The idea of repurposing the mats that were used to transfer smelt to Gull Lake back in the 1990s and use them as sampling devices to assess deposition of smelt eggs is being considered.

Getting Your Purple Martin Colony Started

by Gary Mittelbach

Here are a few tips to help get your purple martin colony established. As with any endeavor, the more care and time you put into it the more likely you are to succeed.

Location: Purple martins want to be near people but in the open. So, if possible put up your martin house within 100 yards of your home and in an open location that is at least 40-60 feet from tall trees. Martins like to "swoop" and sail straight into the house from at least two directions. If you are lucky enough to live on a lake, placing your martin house on a pole out in the lake is ideal (for reasons I'll explain below).

Mounting on a pole: Your martin house needs to be mounted on a pole (recommended height is 12-18 ft). Don't attach it to a tree, because cats, raccoons, snakes and other predators can easily climb trees. It's very important to prevent predators from getting at your martins. On land, the pole should have a predator guard (examples on the internet). If you live on a lake, you can solve the predator problem by locating your martin house out in the lake. I discovered this when we moved to Little Long Lake and I saw my neighbor Philip Dawson walk out into the lake and simply shove a pole (with his martin house on top) into the mud. The hard marl bottom of our lake supports a martin house and pole perfectly and at the end of the summer we simply give a good, hard tug to take everything back out of the lake. How easy!

Houses: There are many types of martin houses (including gourds) and a quick look on the internet will show you more options than you might have thought possible. You can get fancy (and pricey) very quickly, but you can also start with a simple house that follows these few guidelines.

1) Purple Martins like to nest in groups—so a house with at least 4 compartments should be offered (6 to 8 compartments is a great starter home). 2) Each compartment should be at least 6" x 6" x 12". Some martin houses have compartments that are only 6" x 6" x 6", but research shows that this is too small for purple martins to lay a full clutch of eggs (up to 7) and raise the young. Also, bigger compartments provide better protection from owl predation. 3) Traditional round entrance holes that work to discourage starlings from nesting in your house (see the image to the right), 4) You should buy (or make) a house that allows you to open each compartment from the outside for cleaning, 5) At the end of the nesting season clean each compartment with a 10% bleach and water solution, and finally 6) A word about European starlings and English sparrows. These aggressive, non-native birds are trouble with a capital T. They can quickly take over a house and fill each nesting cavity with a mass of sticks and weeds (plus they can kill martin nestlings). To avoid this, put up your martin house (or open the capped holes) near the time when adult martins are first scheduled to arrive (early April in our area). Also note that English sparrows and starlings are not protected by law since they aren't native birds. So, a pellet gun or air rifle can be effective in keeping these troublesome birds under control.

That's about it. If there is a purple martin colony near you already then you will have an excellent chance of attracting birds to your house the first year. If not, it may take a season or two for them to find you. But, they will! Check out the internet for more information or visit the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary to see an established colony of purple martins in a house/gourd combination.



ZEBRA MUSSEL WATCH



You may have observed the change in zebra mussels when your dock or lift was removed this past fall. The zebra mussels on the left were found in shallow water this fall. They are miniscule in comparison to the zebra mussel on the right which was found in 80 feet of water in 2017. We'll keep watch as spring approaches.



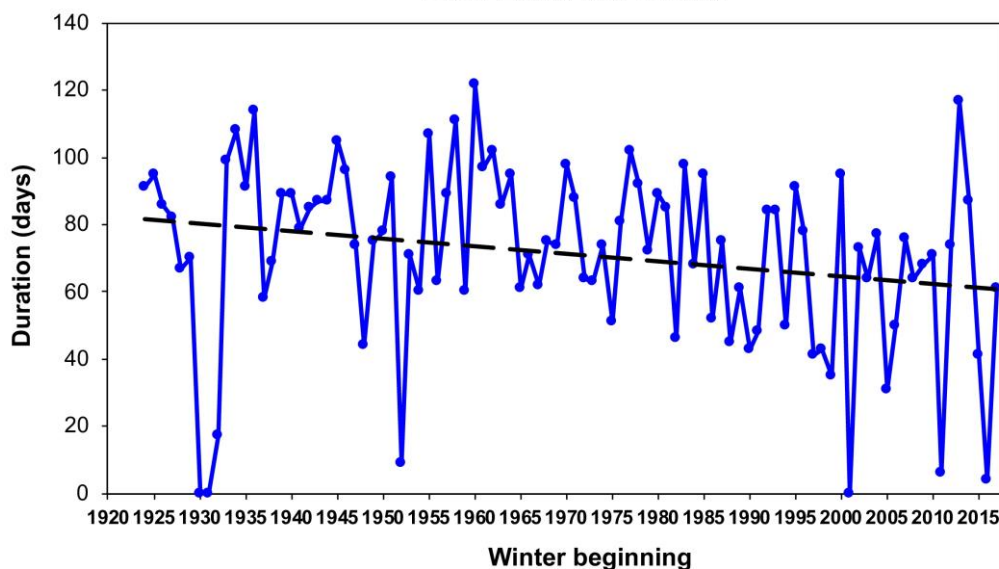
Mark Your Calendar!
Welcome to Summer Party
Sunday, June 2, 2019



FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Steve Hamilton

Gull Lake Ice Cover



Gull Lake has one of the longest ice cover records in our region, dating back to the 1920s. The duration of ice cover varies but on average has shortened by about 20 days, which is consistent with records for a number of lakes across the world. Ice cover in this lake system has been monitored by local citizens including Fred Sherriff Sr., Fred Sherriff Jr., and Betty Johnson, assisted since 1998 by Stephen Hamilton of MSU's Kellogg Biological Station.



**MICHIGAN LAKE
STEWARDSHIP
ASSOCIATIONS**

**Plan to Attend: MLSA Annual Meeting
Innovative Lake Stewardship
Friday & Saturday
May 3 & 4, 2019**

Where: The 58th Annual MLSA Conference will be held at Crystal Mountain in Thompsonville, Michigan.

Who: Many attendees live on inland lakes and streams. Some want to learn more about lakes, others are educators, some are service providers or are volunteers who participate in the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program. All care about the future quality of Michigan's inland lakes and streams.

Key Note Speaker: Alan D. Steinman, PH.D., Director, Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute, GVSU

Sessions Include: PFAS: Issues and Actions, Farming and its Impact on Lakes and Watersheds, Wake Boats: Issues and Impacts, Trouble with Lake Levels, Lake Management Issues, Aquatic Invasive Species

Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP) Training: Will be held on Friday, May 3.

Information: Visit www.mymlsa.org/mlsa-58th-annual-conference/ or call Mike Gallagher at 269-209-1566.

Consider applying to participate in the Michigan Lake and Streams Leaders Institute

Community members, decision makers, water resource professionals, and waterfront property owners can become more effective stewards of Michigan's waterways in the Michigan Lake and Stream Leaders Institute.

As a participant, you will learn in the classroom and outdoors as we explore Michigan lakes, streams, and watersheds. Experts from universities, natural resource agencies, and local communities will share their experience in watershed management, lake and stream ecology, environmental education, leadership, conflict management, and working with organizations and government agencies. For more information see https://www.canr.msu.edu/michigan_lake_and_stream_leaders_institute.

Michigan Senate Bill 1136 passed the senate and was approved by then Governor Snyder at the end of 2018. The following are key aspects of the bill:

- Require the DEQ to establish an inland lake aquatic invasive plant species control and eradication program.
- Require the program to provide grants to eligible applicants for eligible projects to control and eradicate inland lake aquatic invasive plant species.
- Create the "Inland Lake Aquatic Invasive Plant Species Control and Eradication Fund" within the State Treasury for inland lake aquatic invasive plant species control or eradication grants.



Mike Gallagher, GQLO Water Quality chairperson and president, Michigan Lake Stewardship Associations testified in favor of SB 1136 before the Michigan Natural Resources Council.

We thank the 2019 GLQO Individual and Family Members

Anonymous (11)	Sally and Randy Crockett	Stephen Hamilton	Howard D. Linders
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 Ron and Sonya Young
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 Marsha and Bob Zick

We thank the 2019 GLQO Corporate Members

Abigail Hayden Interior Design, LLC
Banner Beachfront Equipment
Bell Tower Lake House Living, LLC
Boris Realtors
Gull Lake Country Club

Gull Lake Ministries
Hawks Hollow Builders
Mac's Garage, LLC
Michigan Lawn Services
Serafino's

ON THE BAY AT GULL LAKE

JAQUA REALTORS OPENS ITS 8TH LOCATION IN WEST MICHIGAN ON GULL LAKE IN RICHLAND

Visit Us @ JaquaRealtors.com

GLQO proudly welcomes Jaqua Realtors as our newest advertiser!

We extend our sincerest appreciation to Dick Boris and all the associates at Boris Realtors for their years of support for the mission of the Gull Lake Quality Organization. We wish you the best!

The Gull Lake Quality Organization

P.O. Box 144 / Richland, Michigan / 49083

Website: glqo.net

Contact: info@glqo.net



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

GLQO Board Meeting

Gull Lake Ministries

May 3 & 4, 2019

Michigan Lake Stewardship Association

Annual Meeting at Crystal Mountain

Thompsonville, MI

Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

GLQO Board Meeting

Gull Lake Ministries

Welcome to Summer Party

Sunday, June 2, 2019

Gull Lake Country Club

2018-2019 Board of Directors

Vicki Gesmundo Marcinek (20-2)

President

Gary Mittelbach (20-1)

Vice President

Jim Collier (19-2)

Secretary

Don Paulson (20-2)

Treasurer

Bryan Beck (21-1)

John Etzcorn (19-1)

Kathy Gallagher (20-2)

Mike Gallagher (20-2)

Tom Gallagher (20-1)

Pete Hawk (19-2)

Joe Lukeman (20-1)

Steve Keith (20-1)

Robert Phillips (19-1)

Gregg Pierce (20-1)

Linda Shierlaw (19-1)

Brook Wilke (20-1)

*GLQO by-laws allow volunteers to serve as directors for two consecutive three-year terms. After each Director's name are two numbers: the **year** their current term expires, and the **number** of the current term.*

We welcome you to volunteer for committee work (of your choice) and to participate in our board meetings.

The Gull Lake Watershed includes Gull Lake, Little Long Lake, Grassy Lake, Little Gull Lake, Miller Lake, Bullhead Lake, Duck Lake, Backus Lake, Dake Lake, Elliston Lake, Mud Lake, Wintergreen Lake, and Prairieville Creek.