

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.

Fisheries Update 2020

By Bryan Beck, Fisheries Chairperson

The GLQO has been in touch with anglers and the DNR throughout the year and we have updates with respect to two of Gull Lake's favorite fisheries: Northern Pike and Smelt.

Northern Pike

For a variety of reasons, including their spot in the food chain and angler fishing preference, Northern Pike are an important fishery in Gull Lake. Many anglers target Northern Pike through the ice in winter and by casting or trolling in open water during the warmer months. Angler reports have indicated that most fish captured are between 22 and 25 inches and the number of legal sized fish has declined. Some anglers have asked for modified regulations to provide better fishing opportunities on Gull Lake (e.g., slot limits with both an upper and lower size range within which fish may be harvested). However, without the benefit of length and age data, it was difficult to determine if the lack of larger fish is due to excess exploitation/mortality, on the one hand, or poor growth, on the other hand.

Northern Pike age structures were collected by anglers from February through October 2018. Anglers were recruited through coordination with the GLQO, online angling forums, and biologist angler contacts. Anglers were instructed to collect the first three dorsal spines of captured Northern Pike as close to the base as possible and to also report the total length and date of capture. Scale envelopes and instructions were provided to the anglers. In addition, the parking lot attendant at the boat ramp collected spines from anglers at the ramp who were willing to participate in the study.

In summary, a total of 69 Northern Pike spines were submitted to the DNR from Gull Lake in 2018.

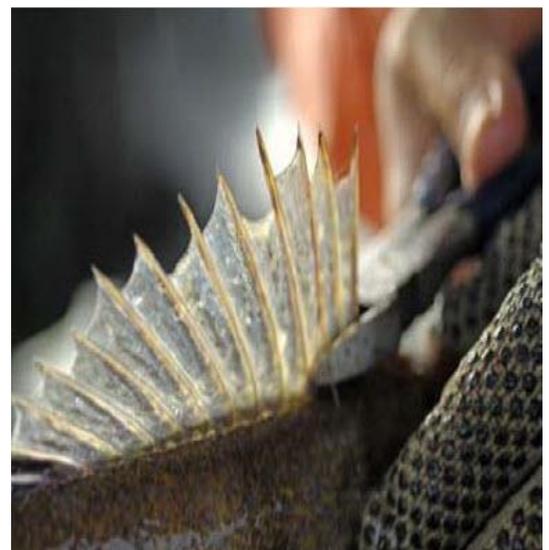
Continued on page 3

Winter 2020

In This Issue:

Fisheries Update 2020	1
News about CLMP	2
The Cold Facts about Ice	2
Possible New Controls on CAFOs	5
Gull Lake Dam Update	6
Appreciating GLQO Members	7

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.



The first three or four spines from the dorsal fin are clipped at the base using side cutters.

Important News about Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program

As you might be aware, the GLQO has participated in the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program for eleven years. The following is an excerpt from the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association e-newsletter regarding the current status of CLMP.

“We (MLSA) received this message from EGLE on January 14, 2020: "MiCorps is a network of volunteer water quality monitoring programs in Michigan created by former Governor Granholm under Michigan Executive Order #2003-15 to assist the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) in collecting and sharing water quality data. Initial funding for the MiCorps program was provided through the Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) bond; however, due to the exhaustion of these CMI funds, MiCorps has dealt with uncertainty in the past few years while trying to find another long-term funding source.

EGLE is proud to announce that funding has been secured from Renew Michigan Initiative in order to create a new five-year contract for the MiCorps program. Due to the timing of acquiring this funding and the necessary transition to initiate a new contract, the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP) will not be able to be funded in 2020, but will return in 2021.”

The CLMP and the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program (VSMP) will both be included in the new contract. MiCorps is excited to build on this fantastic program by updating the long-term database and website along with reinstating stream macroinvertebrate grants. MiCorps would like to thank all the volunteers for your support of the program.”

Volunteers from GLQO will continue to monitor Gull Lake and Little Long Lake. However, some data will not be officially recorded for 2020.

The Cold Facts About Ice

Reprinted with permission: Minnesota DNR

You can’t judge ice conditions just by appearance or thickness. Many other factors, including water depth, size of water body, water chemistry, currents, snow cover, age of ice, and local weather combine to determine its strength.

New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly formed ice may support one person on foot, while a foot or more of old, partially thawed ice may not. *Continued on page 3*

Ice is Never 100% Safe!

Minimum Guidelines for New Clear Ice Only

Ice Safety Tips

- Double the thickness guidelines for white or snow-covered ice.
- Carry two large nails to use as ice picks if you fall through.
- Avoid pressure ridges and areas with current.
- Warn children about the dangers of thin ice.
- Don’t drive on the ice at night.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages.

mndnr.gov/icesafety

DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

The Cold Facts About Ice *Continued from page 2*

Ice seldom freezes uniformly. It may be a foot thick in one location and only an inch or two just a few feet away. Ice near shore can be weaker than ice farther out. Check ice thickness every 150 feet at a minimum.

Ice formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous. This is especially true near streams, springs, channels between lakes, bridges, culverts and aeration systems. The ice on outside river bends is usually weaker due to the faster current.

The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process. The extra weight of snow cover also reduces how much weight the ice sheet can support. Shovel any snow before testing the ice for thickness and color.

Watch for large cracks, depressions or pressure ridges and avoid those areas. *Ice Rescue Using Jumper Cables*

Moving fish populations can bring warm water up from the bottom of the lake, and waterfowl can warm the surface of the ice causing holes to open up, posing a threat to anyone traveling on the ice.



Fisheries Update 2020 *Continued from page 1*

The average length of submitted fish was 24.1 inches and ranged from 12.3 to 31.5 inches. Fifty seven percent (57%) of fish submitted were greater than 24 inches and legal to harvest. Northern Pike average length-at-age was similar to the state average for ages 1 through 4, but much lower for ages over 5 (see Figure 1 on page 6). Almost half of the age 4 fish captured were over 24 inches in length (45%) with 3 fish over 28 inches, which were likely females. Fish age 5 and up were a mix of legal and sub-legal sized fish that averaged 24 to 26 inches. The two most likely candidates that could impact the average observed length-at-age are angler harvest and competition for prey. High angler harvest can crop off older fish resulting in depressed size structure and fewer large fish. Because the observed growth rates of younger fish were not depressed and the population is low density, it is unlikely a lack of prey that is limiting size structure. High growth rates were observed in the DNR survey in 2002 when smelt populations were still rebounding. Large Northern Pike are most likely preying on larger bodied suckers and only feeding on smelt opportunistically. Representatives from the DNR have indicated that despite reduced size structure, Northern Pike are reaching the size limit by age 4 and recruiting well to the fishery. Potential management ideas would be to either (a) continue to maintain a harvest-based fishery where 24-inch fish are available to harvest with fewer large fish available; or (b) protect larger size classes to potentially increase size structure while allowing the harvest of smaller fish (e.g. slot limit). DNR fisheries representatives will meet with anglers and the GLQO in the near future to explore these options with those who fish on Gull Lake. Please do let us know if you have any thoughts on this.

Smelt

As was previously reported by the GLQO, a fish kill occurred on Gull Lake in 2016, which was primarily composed of smelt. Not surprisingly, anglers reported poor fishing for smelt following the fish kill.

Continued on page 4

Fisheries Update *Continued from page 3*

Spawning run monitoring and a volunteer ice fishing creel were conducted to evaluate the status of the smelt population. A total of 33 angler trips were reported in the 2018-2019 winter volunteer creel. Trips averaged 4 hours for a total of 197 angler hours reported. A total of 16 trips targeted Rainbow Smelt (48%) with the remaining mostly targeting panfish or Yellow Perch (36%), Northern Pike (6%) and one trip each targeting Lake Trout and Rainbow Trout. Anglers reported a total of 1,414 fish caught of which 89 were released. Smelt were captured in the highest number (1,168 fish) and none were released. A total of eleven Northern Pike were reported ranging from 19 to 28 inches. Five of the eleven Northern Pike reported were larger than 24 inches and all legal fish were harvested. No Rainbow Trout or Lake Trout were caught. Smelt anglers average catch rate was 10.9 fish per hour compared to 3.8 fish per hour for other anglers. In general, the smelt population appears to have rebounded well and catch rates have been good, although angler effort appears to be down. Early indications from 2020 are that smelt are present and are being marked. Reports suggest that some 2 to 3-inch fish are being caught, which would indicate successful reproduction in 2019. Few smelt were observed spawning in Prairieville Creek during spring monitoring in 2018 and 2019. We understand that the DNR will search for other potential spawning locations in 2020 to determine if smelt are using other sites. The DNR and the GLQO would like to extend thanks to all who provided reports. Angler feedback is the most essential piece involved in monitoring the health of the Gull Lake fishery.

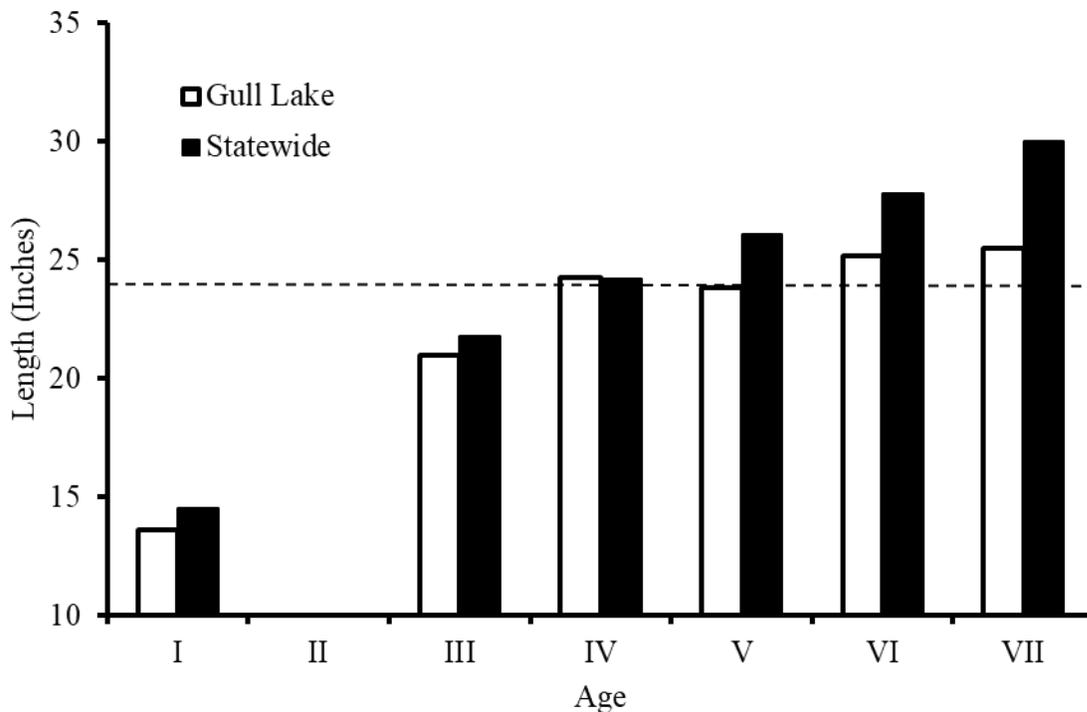


Figure 1. Estimated average length for pike from Gull Lake captured by anglers compared to the statewide average length-at-age for June/July. The dashed line represents the 24-inch minimum size limit.

Possible New Controls on CAFOs

Reprinted with permission: Paul J. Sniadecki, MLSA Board Director

EGLE (formerly DEQ) regulators want to revise how the environmental risk from spreading livestock waste on farms is evaluated as part of a new “draft” general permit for industrial scale agriculture businesses known as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations or CAFOs that would, among other things, prohibit the application of manure on farm fields during three winter months.

Public comment was open through Dec. 18, 2019 on the proposed updates to the state’s general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program for CAFOs. The last revisions to the NDPEs Permit Program occurred in 2015 and applied to over 250 NDPEs permitted farms in Michigan. Michigan has delegated authority from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to issue NPDES permits and the state says its proposed changes were developed with EPA input.

EGLE released its planned revisions in late October 2019. Farm industry advocates blasted the proposed changes, while environmental advocates say the new requirements are important measures that will protect water quality and improve public access to permit records.

In Michigan, waste from confined animal farms is usually stored in large lagoons and spread on fields as crop fertilizer. While that can help increase crop yield, it can also degrade water quality when nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen run off into lakes, streams, and rivers as well impact groundwater and wells. There have been numerous discharges from land application of CAFO waste, especially during winter and this has raised concerns for regulators. Among the larger changes proposed is a ban on spreading CAFO manure in January, February, and March when the ground may be frozen and there is a higher risk of nutrients in the waste sliding into waterways rather than percolating into the soil. Some spreading could occur at the end of March with state regulatory approval.

One of the largest updates is the phasing-in of a screening tool that would replace a simple soil test for phosphorus levels when assessing the risk of manure application. The Michigan Phosphorus Risk Assessment (MPRA) would account for erosion, runoff potential, distance to surface water or a field edge, subsurface drainage, and vegetative buffers.

As of January 12, 2020, the draft version of the permit changes had not been updated to reflect any of the public comments received during December 2019. EGLE has set an April 1, 2020 target date for the implementation of the revised NDPEs Permit Program. MLSA will continue to monitor this important matter for the riparians of our state.

DID YOU KNOW...

Gull Lake residents have been keeping track of freezing and thawing dates for 100 years. There have been three years in recorded history where Gull Lake has failed to freeze over entirely – two years during the dust bowl (1930 and 1931) and again in 2001. 2020 ICE NOTE: Gull Lake froze this year on January 20th but thawed to less than 50% coverage on February 7th. It refroze on February 14th.

Gull Lake Dam Project Update

By Jeff Price, GLDA

The Great News: We met our \$700,000 goal!

The Bad News: We began our capital campaign in May of 2019 to raise funds to replace the dam. We contracted with Prein & Newhof, an engineering firm with extensive experience in the design and construction of dams in Michigan. As part of their initial work, Prein & Newhof prepared a cost estimate (May 2018) of \$670,000, which included a 10% contingency factor. From that estimate, we established our fundraising goal of \$700,000. We met that goal thanks to everyone’s hard work and the generosity of Gull Lake property owners and local businesses.

In December 2019, Prein & Newhof completed the engineering design and put the project out for public bid. Unfortunately, their original estimate of cost was significantly less than the lowest of the five actual bids received. In the 19 months between the original estimate and the actual (lowest) bid, the cost increased 41.8%. This increase is largely due to the increased pressure on construction labor costs. As such, we currently have a shortfall of \$293,000 necessary to fund this project. The lowest priced bid is valid until June 30, 2020 after which time, it will have to be re-bid. As such: *WE WILL CONTINUE OUR FUND RAISING EFFORTS AND IF NEEDED, WE WILL DELAY OUR CONSTRUCTION START DATE UNTIL ALL THE DAM CONSTRUCTION MONEY HAS BEEN RAISED.*

59th Annual MLSA Conference

Who Attends: Those who 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.

Tentative Agenda: Michigan Boat and Watercraft Trends and Issues, Water Withdrawal Issues in Michigan, Impact of Short-term Rentals on Michigan Lakes, The Impact of Agri-Business on Michigan Lakes & Streams, Michigan Streams and Wetlands Report, Insurance Issues on Michigan Lakes, Special Assessment Districts

Information: Visit www.mymlsa.org/mlsa-59th-annual-conference/ or call Mike Gallagher at 269-209-1566.

**Plan to Attend:
Protecting Michigan’s
Lake and Streams
May 1 & 2, 2020
Crystal Mountain Resort
Thompsonville, MI**



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We thank the 2020 GLQO Individual and Family Members

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Bud and Judi Baldwin	Bill Gust	Stephen E. Pew /	and Ronda E. Stryker
Jack Bargo and Patti Colasanti	William Guzy	Kathleen M. Keelan Pew	Ron and Edna Thompson
David Battjes	Pete and Margaret Hamlett	Alison Pruitt	Bill and Carolyn Ticknor
Rick and Kathy Beauregard	Pete and Jo Hawk	John and Susan Quertermus	Chris Tracy and Michelle Tracy
Bryan and Courtney Beck	Henry B. Hawk	Robert and Margo Rebar	Isobel and Matt Tracy
Mac and Susan Behnke	Jim and Marsha Heath	Bob and Bina Reed	Roger and Jeanne Turner
Gordon and Sally Birdsall	James and Patricia Heilenbach	Robert D. and Mary Jo Rial	Bill and Ruth Ann Uggen
Dick and Debbie Boris	George and Arla Hillebrand	Brian and Jackie Rice	Bo and Mel Van Peenan
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David and Heide Boutell	Fred and Megan James	Brad and Rene Saar	Brad VandenBerg
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Richard and Joanne Chamberlin	Wes and Susan Kolb	Pete and Diane Czuk Smith	Brook and Emily Wilke
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Alison and Rob Credit	Suzanne Stimson Leech	Charles Stoddard	Ron and Sonya Young
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Todd and Ruth DeNooyer	Judy Maier		
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Pam Dewey	Ed and Nancy McCarty		
John and Susan Doster	Tom and Valli McDougale		
Lisa Duffy	William and Joyce Melvin		
Dr. David Dvorak	Robert Millard		
Bonnie and Loyal Eldridge	Kate Miller		
Ron Elenbaas	Kay Gross and Gary Mittelbach		
John and Janis Etcorn	Ron and Joan Molitor		
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Dan and Mary Beth Gallagher	Nancy L. and James D. Nordlie		
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John Garside, Jr	Billy and Amanda Ogden		
Vicki Gesmundo and Mike Marcinek	Jerry and Max Orum		
Elizabeth Getz	Craig and Sue Osborn		
Jim and Bonnie Gordon	Christine McCarthy and Bob Paksi		
Joni Green	Preston and Barbara Parish		
Jim and Bonnie Grooters			

We thank the 2020 GLQO Corporate Members

Hawks Hollow Builders

A Membership Reminder

By Gregg Pierce, Membership Chair

In the fall newsletter, we shared that the GLQO Board voted to send annual dues reminders each January for the upcoming year.

You should have recently received your dues reminder for 2020 in your mail. We hope that this change and continued reminders through the membership listing in the newsletter will encourage regular renewals and potentially bring new members to our organization.

To be listed in the spring newsletter, please renew your membership by April 1, 2020.

Not Yet A Member? Join GLQO on-line at GLQO.net

Every effort is made to report member's names as you have requested. If you see an error, please email info@glqo.net.

The Gull Lake Quality Organization

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

Website: glqo.net

Contact: info@glqo.net



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

GLQO Board Meeting

Location: Gull Lake Ministries

Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

GLQO Board Meeting

Location: Gull Lake Ministries

Welcome to Summer Party

Sunday, June 7, 2020

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

GLQO Board Meeting

Location: Gull Lake Ministries

Annual Meeting

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

2019-2020 Board of Directors

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President

Sera Gesmundo (22-1)

Vice President

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Gregg Pierce (20-1)

Margo Rebar (22-1)

Linda Shierlaw (22-2)

Doug Smith (23-1)

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.