

## FISH STOCKING REPORT 6-22-19

We have been working with DNR for many years although, in the last three years we have been working more closely with them to improve our relationship. Specifically with Kathrin Schouder, the Senior Fisheries Biologist with the SOUTHERN LAKE HURON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT UNIT. Their Unit covers 18 Counties and encompasses all of the waters that drain into the southern portion of Lake Huron. They are responsible for managing the Inland Lakes and waters in their Unit.

**History** of Sages Lake the s was dropped off of maps and literature after 1941. Management of Sage Lake began in the late 1930s with some fish stocking.

**More than (1,000,000+)WALLEYE FRY were stocked in Sage Lake from 1937 to 1944.** Walleyes did not become established from these early plants. From 1983 to 2009 our Lake was stocked with more than 73,000 Walleye. Our lake is not considered a Walleye Lake because the Lake is not a suitable environment for Walleyes and they have been unable to reproduce and stabilize as a competitive species.

The Management records indicate that the first biological inventory was made in 1949. Additional fisheries surveys were conducted in 1955, 1958, 1965, 1979, 1986, 1993, 2001, and 2007 an average of every 6 years although the last one was 12yrs. ago. DNR did not want to do another Sage Lake survey for at least a few more years, although in working with them closely to confirm the data that was reported in the last two surveys, we were able to convince them to move the survey to this year.

Three other Lakes in Michigan have done private lake surveys and studies that range in cost from 4k (Ryerson Lake 2014) to 30K (Hess Lake 3 yr. 2018), 8K (Lake Ogemaw, 2017). We are also working with other Lakes and DEQ to gather information as to what is working and what is not, for continued success with Sage Lake Management.

DNR did our initial SAGE LAKE SURVEY the week of June 10<sup>th</sup> this year. They put in at least 10 nets and collected them each day and counted the fish and recorded the information they needed for their survey. They will continue to do a Limnology (study of inland Aquatic ecosystems) survey in August of this year or next and coordinate their information with DEQ (EGLE) and a full report will be published next year.

We have asked for a preliminary report from Kathrin from the information gathered to date and am waiting for her reply.

We think that we should wait for the full report to be published before we make any further decisions on FISH STOCKING.

## ANSWERS to Questions asked at meeting

Some of the surveys are completed using a standard sampling protocol where the aquatic community is examined and sampling effort is based on lake size (Wehrly et al. in Press). Survey effort can include 2 maxi-mini fyke nets, 6 fyke nets, 4 trap nets, 3 gill net sets, and 3 15-minute boat electrofishing transects.

Fisheries Division should be consulted to ensure that all stocking efforts are aligned with current knowledge and management direction.

A typical report is divided into 5 Areas of Study , ENVIORNMENT, HISTORY, CURRENT STATUS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION, and MANAGEMENT DIRECTION.

From Chris Schelb, DNR Technician Supervisor: Sorry that we did not see more fish. Am not sure what is going on at the moment. Have heard that other Units around state are also seeing similar trends with there pan fish this year. Do emphasize that everything is cyclic and populations do fluctuate, this may be one of those years. Will keep you informed if additional information is available.

From Kathrin Schrouder: The techs told me they got mostly rough fish and very few panfish. I don't know exactly why but the weather didn't help.

More investigation may be needed in the future.