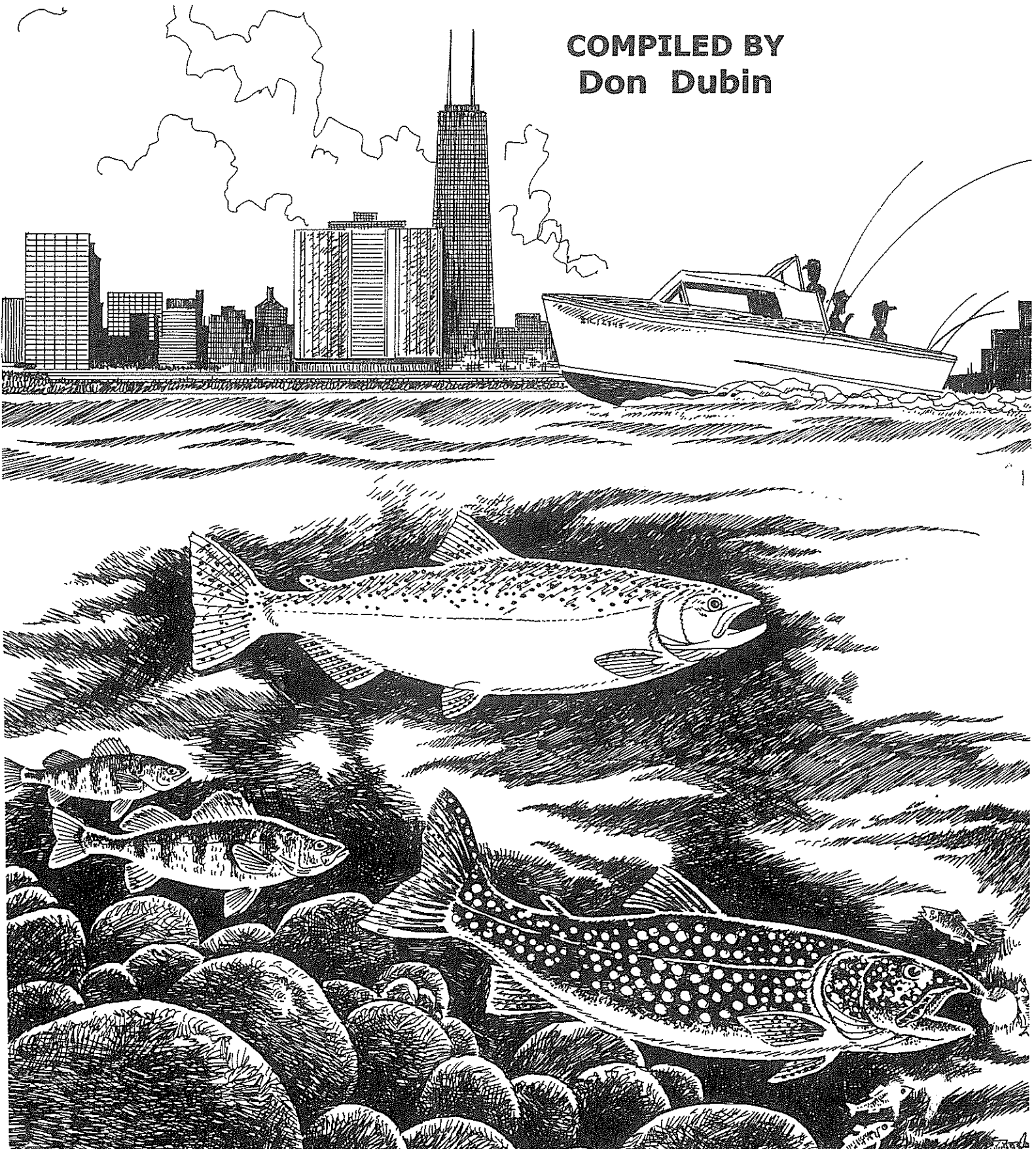


"BEFORE WE FORGET"

**THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
OF OUR LAKE MICHIGAN FISHERY**

**COMPILED BY
Don Dubin**



DON DUBIN'S BIOGRAPHY

Don Dubin has been involved with fishing, taxidermy, and woodcarving his entire life and his accomplishments are as follows:

Inducted into the **National Fishing Hall of Fame** as a **Legendary Angler**.

Also in the **Illinois Conservation** and the **Muskies Inc. Hall of Fame**.

Involved in the creation of both the **muskie** and **salmon fishery in Illinois**.

Founding member and **educational director** of **Salmon Unlimited**.

Master Angler of **Salmon Unlimited**, and held the **World Line Class** record for steelhead trout.

Past President of the **Illinois Steelheaders**.

Twice president of the **Chicagoland Muskie Hunters**.

Delegate to the **Illinois Muskie Alliance**.

Featured speaker at the major Sport Shows and fishing clubs in the Midwest.

Member of the **Great Lakes Outdoor Writer**, and has had written many articles for major publications.

On the **Fishing Advisory Committee** for the **City of Chicago**.

Taught taxidermy classes at the **Chicago Shedd Aquarium**.

Won "**Best in the World Award**" for his carving of a bluegill in the natural finish.

Won "**Peoples Choice Award**" in **Woodcraft's** fish carving competition

Won many awards which include **Grumbacger's Gold Medallion**, **North Suburban Carver's** and **Owl Lumber's award for wood carving**.

Maintains an exhibit of fishing tackle, taxidermy, and wood carving at his home.

For more information contact DON DUBIN at 847-679-1531 or email don.dubin@yahoo.com

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Before we Forget

Compiled and written by Don Dubin

Most people do not know the history of the Great Lakes fishery and Salmon Unlimited involvement in starting the Illinois salmon and trout program in Lake Michigan.

The Great Lakes are changing and I am concerned that the Lake Michigan fishery could take a downward cycle. I have voiced my opinion and concerns about the future of our fisheries.

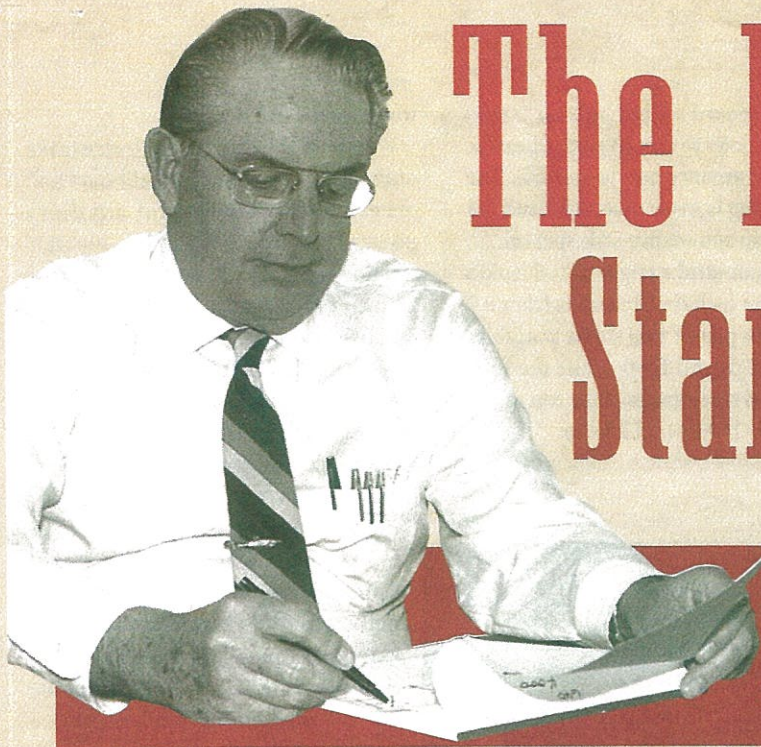
As a young kid, I loved fishing along the lakefront for perch and lake herring. As I got older, I met many friends who shared my interest in fishing. One day, I heard that Howard Tanner was giving a talk about the newly created salmon fishery at the International Amphitheater Fishing Show.

I attended his lecture and was really inspired. I felt that "some day I could catch a trophy salmon".

In 1971, "Coho Joe," Sachar, and I met with Ken and Dan Dumong. We share the same interests which was the betterment of the salmon and trout fishery in Lake Michigan. We decided to start a fishing club called Salmon Unlimited.

Salmon Unlimited grew rapidly and a club was started in Indiana and Wisconsin. The list of people who volunteered their time and devotion to the club is endless.

Howard Tanner, who started the salmon fishery, came to Chicago and arrangements were made to supply Chinook fry for Salmon Unlimited stocking program. We became friends and went fishing for Chinook salmon on Lake Muskegon. I also became friendly Howard Tanner and went fishing for Chinook salmon on Lake Muskegon. Dr Tanner also supplied Chinook fry for Salmon Unlimited stocking program.



The Man Who Started It All

Howard Tanner, the father of Great Lakes salmon fishing.
By Bob Gwizdz

Unless you've got some gray in your hair, odds are pretty good that you don't remember a time when the Great Lakes didn't have salmon. What has become one of the greatest sport fisheries anywhere didn't even exist until the mid-1960s. And though thousands of fisheries managers and citizens have played a role in developing salmon fishing into the billion-dollar industry it is today, much of the credit goes to the vision of one man: Howard Tanner.

Born and raised a fisherman in rural Michigan, Tanner went on to enjoy a lengthy career as a fisheries biologist, director of the Michigan's DNR and a fisheries and wildlife professor at Michigan State University. But it was his bold effort to rehabilitate a moribund fishery—and his even bolder belief that Pacific salmon were the fish to do it with—that has earned him a prominent place in the history of the Great Lakes as well as a spot in the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame.

Tanner was born to work with fish. The only child of a shopkeeper in Kalamazoo County, he relocated to Antrim County into northwest Lower Peninsula (where his father subsequently became sheriff) when he was a toddler. And he had a fishing rod in his hand as soon as he could hold one.

"My father was carrying me over the deep spots in the Jordan River when I was 5 years old," Tanner recalls. "I can remember when they cut the [trout] limit from 25 to 15. My father thought it was the end of the world."

Tanner says the highlight of his adolescence was when, as a 13-year-old, he caught a 5-pound rainbow trout. "We didn't call them steelhead back then, but I'm sure it was," he says.

By the time he was 15 he was guiding anglers, mostly for small-mouth bass on the rivers. He continued to work as a fishing guide and at a bait shop through his first year of college at Western Michigan. When he was 19, he enlisted in the army and ended up

in the Pacific.

But as fate would have it, the army sent him to Michigan State University as part of training program. And when he mustered out in 1946, he thought it was only natural to go back to MSU, which had a fisheries program as part of the School of Agriculture.

He earned a degree in 1947 and was about to head to Alaska to work as a fisheries technician when a professor offered him a fellowship working on a fertilization project on a lake in the northeast Lower Peninsula. He stayed on and earned a master's degree. That led to a project on a trout lake in Pigeon River Country and a Ph.D.

Soon after receiving his doctorate in 1952, Tanner went to work as an assistant professor at Colorado State University and gradually took over the Colorado Fisheries Cooperative Research Program. He spent 12 years in Colorado, eventually becoming chief of fisheries research of the Colorado Game, Fish and Parks Department, where, among his various projects, he stocked coho salmon into a reservoir. In the summer of 1964, he was recruited to return to Michigan to take over the fisheries division of the Department of Conservation—an unheard of turn of events at the time, when the job was traditionally awarded to biologists who had come up through the ranks. He accepted the job and began in September.

At the time, Great Lakes lake trout fishing had collapsed due largely to the nefarious sea lamprey. What had been essentially a commercial fishery was virtually worthless. And that, Tanner says, presented not only the unique opportunity to re-create a fishery, but to change it from a commercial enterprise to a recreational one.

Department of Conservation director Ralph MacMullen challenged him to do something about the Great Lakes. "He said, 'Do something, and whatever you do, try to make it spectacular,'" Tanner recalls:

Essentially given carte blanche, Tanner went right to work. He saw the Great Lakes as “a plum hanging on a low branch,” and decided to attempt to establish kokanee salmon, which biologists were working with in freshwater in Colorado, into the big lakes. Because he had connections in Colorado, he sent a crew out west to take eggs. They brought back 50,000, which were hatched out and stocked in Torch Lake that November with the idea of creating brood stock for a Great Lakes stocking program.

Ultimately, the kokanee program failed to bear fruit. But in December, something even better happened: A colleague from Oregon called telling him that because of an unusually large run of coho salmon that fall, the state had excess eggs available. It took Tanner about a minute to accept them.

Michigan received a million eggs from Oregon in December and January, which were transported to the state’s Oden Fish Hatchery. After they hatched out, fisheries personnel moved them to the Platte River to imprint them, where they were raised in dirt-lined raceways. On April 2, 1966, the year-and-a-half-old coho were released into Lakes Michigan and Superior.

Tanner had originally planned to release the fish only into Lake Michigan, where annual die-offs of alewife were an unsightly, smelly nuisance. “We looked at the alewife as the food supply upon which to build an outstanding recreational fishery,” Tanner says. But he had to promise some fish to Superior to placate a powerful Upper Peninsula legislator who chaired the senate’s appropriations committee—someone who could prove helpful when the fisheries division needed funding.

“It took a lot of selling,” Tanner remembers. “I think I talked to every sportsmen’s club in the country. I went to the legislators, collectively and individually. It took \$500,000. It was general fund money. The legislator didn’t think too much of that. Finally [Sen.] Joe Mack said, ‘I’ll vote for you if you put some of them in Lake Superior.’”

So he did. About 150,000 went into the Lake Superior’s Big Huron River, while 650,000 went into Platte River and Bear Creek, a tributary of the Manistee River flowing into Lake Michigan.

The coho weren’t expected to return until 1967, but the unanticipated run of immature fish in 1966 was spectacular. “We got a run of jacks that knocked the eyes off of everybody,” Tanner says. “They averaged 5 pounds. Some were as big as 8. That was unheard of on the West Coast.” Biologists from Oregon, who couldn’t believe what they were hearing, came out to Michigan to see it for themselves.

By late summer of 1967, Michigan’s unprepared anglers were catching coho in the double digits in Platte Bay. “It was big-time news,” Tanner says. “Then they hit the rivers and it was, ‘Katie, bar the door.’”



“We thought it was going to be big,” he says. “I thought I was either going to be a big bum or big hero and not really sure which. To say that we envisioned the magnitude of it—how could we possibly?”

By that time, Tanner had already decided to return to Michigan State, where he’d been offered a position as an assistant dean. “It wasn’t easy,” he says. “Fish and fishing had been my whole life.”

Tanner’s successor, Wayne Tody, brought in the chinook. The rest, as they say, is history.

These days, Tanner looks back on the entire episode as serendipity.

“The most difficult thing to do was to re-allocate away from commercial fishing to recreational fishing,” Tanner says. “If commercial fishing hadn’t been so bankrupt, we might never had been able to do it.”

But it also coincided with the unusual availability of coho eggs and a chief executive who was willing to let Tanner roll the dice.

“It was a different time,” Tanner says. “We didn’t even have a fishing license—you could fish the Great Lakes for free. I doubt if we could do it again today.”

Tanner subsequently came back to state government; for eight years, he served as director of the DNR. Now retired, he’s an adjunct professor at Michigan State and remains active in conservation matters. In the mid-1990s, during the salmon collapse, he chaired a committee that examined DNR fisheries management practices

to see if it could find an answer. He believes over-stocking was the culprit.

These days Tanner divides his time between Michigan and Florida, where he winters, fishing the mangroves out of an 8-foot boat with a 3-hp motor. In Michigan, he often fishes for brook trout, either with bait in small streams or with flies in larger ones.

“I guess I have to go back to my childhood,” he says.

His favorite angling pastime? Steelhead fishing in the fall.

“I like the fish mainly,” he says. “I like the excitement of the big fish in a small stream and steelhead are a lot more active in the fall than they are in the spring. But stream fishing is my first love, so this is stream fishing with big fish.”

And salmon? Well, Tanner doesn’t fish for them much anymore. But he recalls the episode as an “exhilarating experience.”

“I have been allocated the credit,” he says. “And I take the blame—from strange, misguided people. Every legislator claimed credit for it afterwards.

“You know there’s a saying: Success has many fathers, and failure is a bastard.”

Fortunately for all of us, Howard Tanner didn’t know failure.



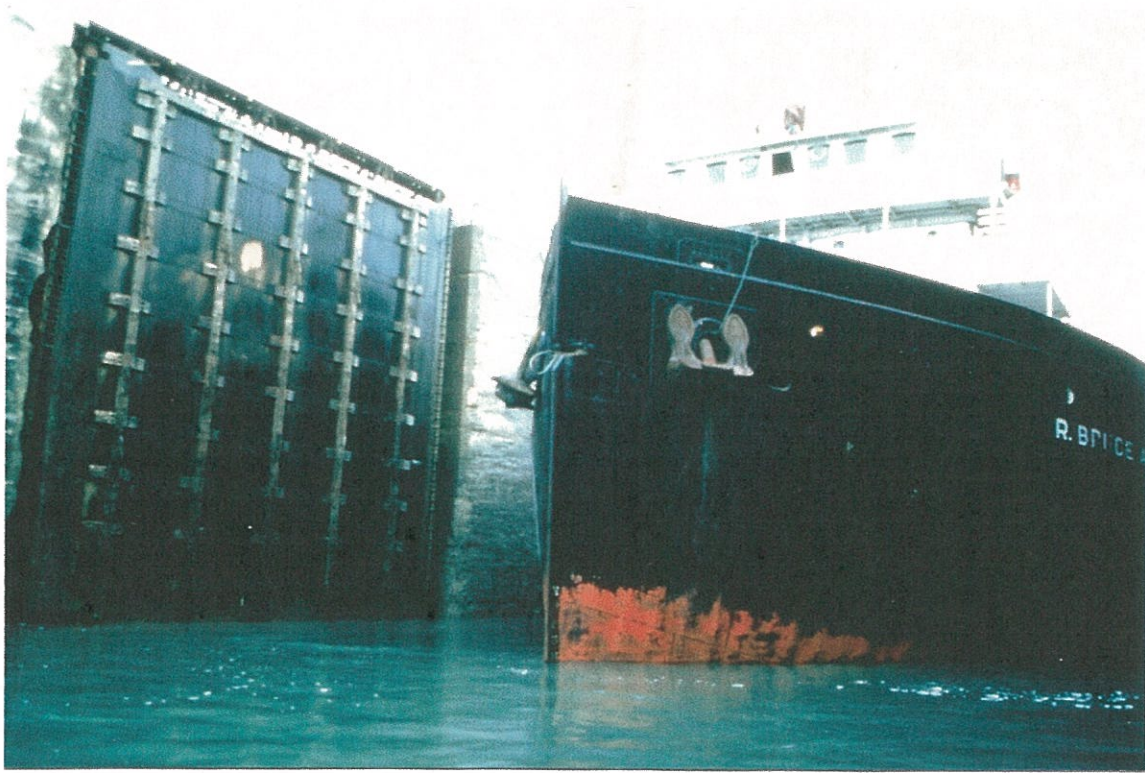
The History of the Great Lakes Fishery

The Great Lakes started during the ice age over a million years ago. The glaciers were over a mile thick and carved vast depressions which continued for thousands of years. The melting of the ice created a vast terrain with many obstructions. The blockage allowed the depressions to fill with water and eventually created the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes contains the largest reserve of freshwater in the world, and Lake Michigan is the sixth largest lake with a depth of 924 feet. The Great lakes are interconnected and flows into the St Lawrence River which emptied into the Atlantic Ocean. In the river, there was a natural barrier called Niagara Falls. This barrier prevented the ocean fish and boats from entering the Great Lakes.

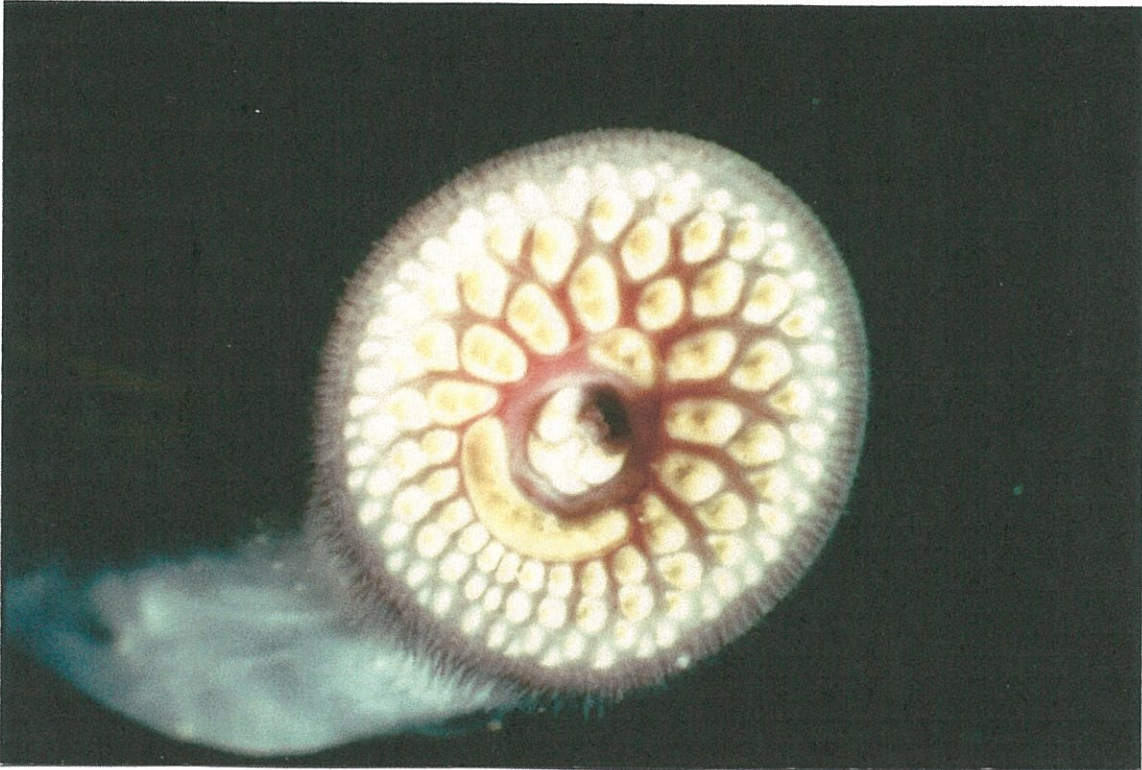
In 1829, the Welland Canal was built which allowed the shipping industry to bypass Niagara Falls and enter the Great Lakes. This was a great opportunity for commerce and opened ports in Detroit, Chicago and Milwaukee.



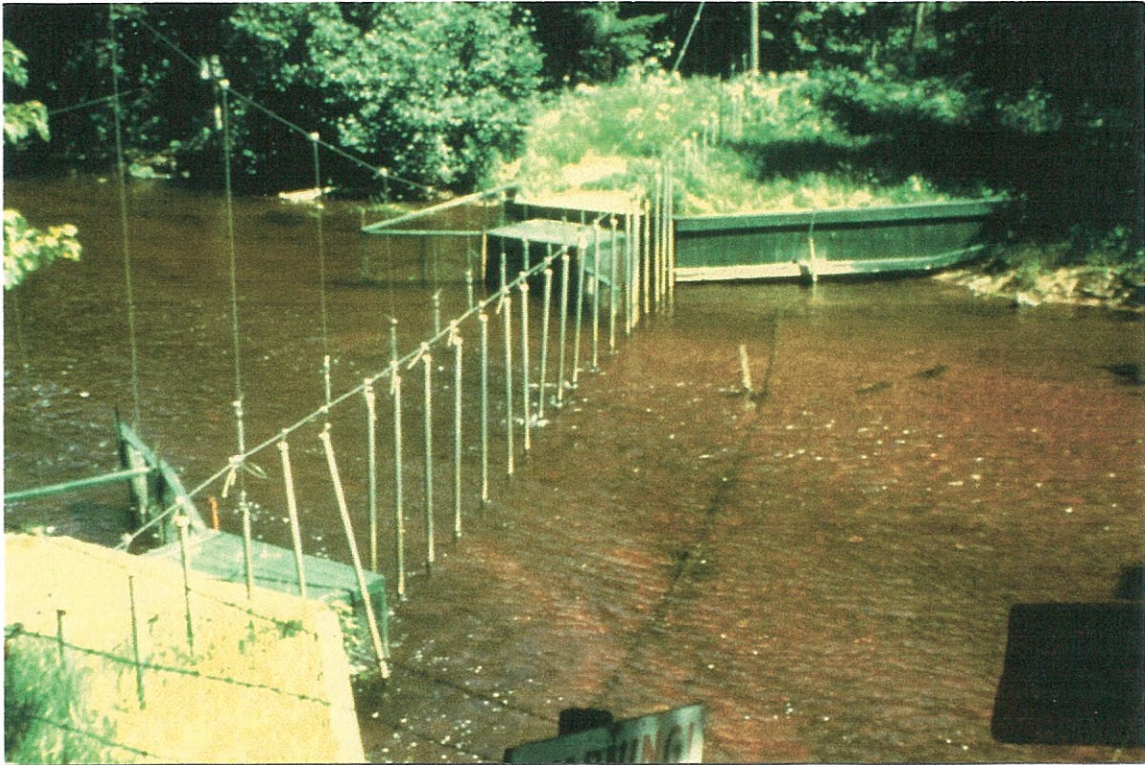


In the past, Lake Michigan was a fertile body of water and the fishery was considered to be inexhaustible. The deeper waters contained lake trout, whitefish, and burbot. In the shallow waters were bass, northern pike, and even sturgeon. The commercial fishing industry in Lake Michigan was very intense and Illinois had 52 licensed gill net fishermen.

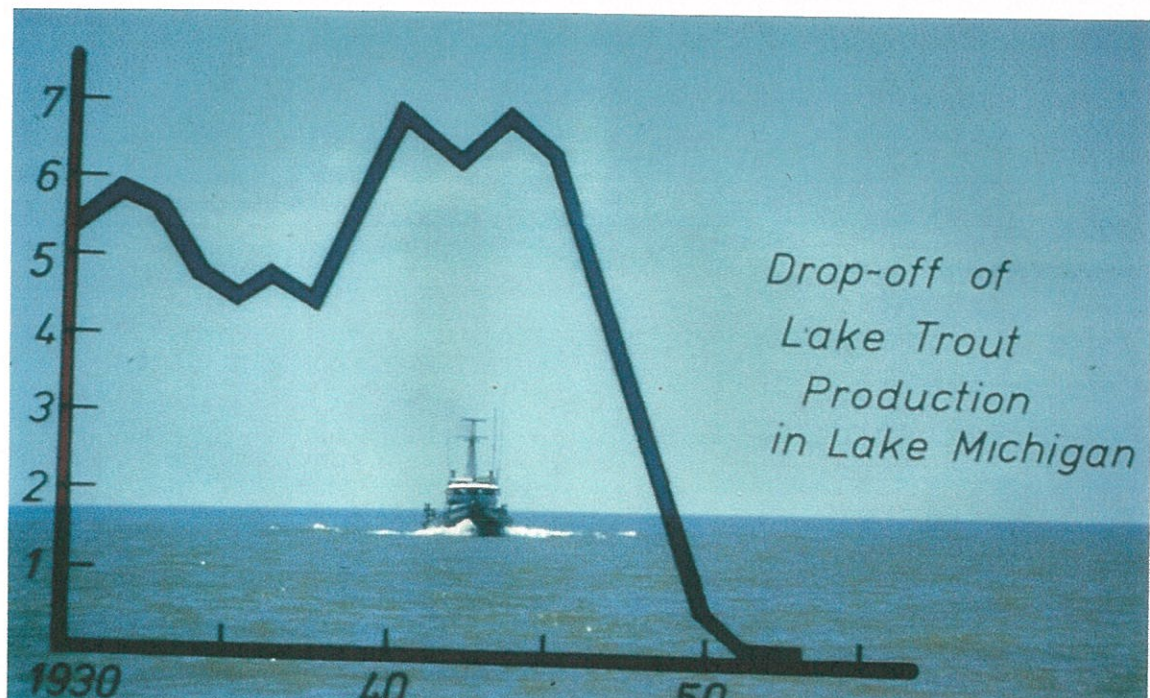
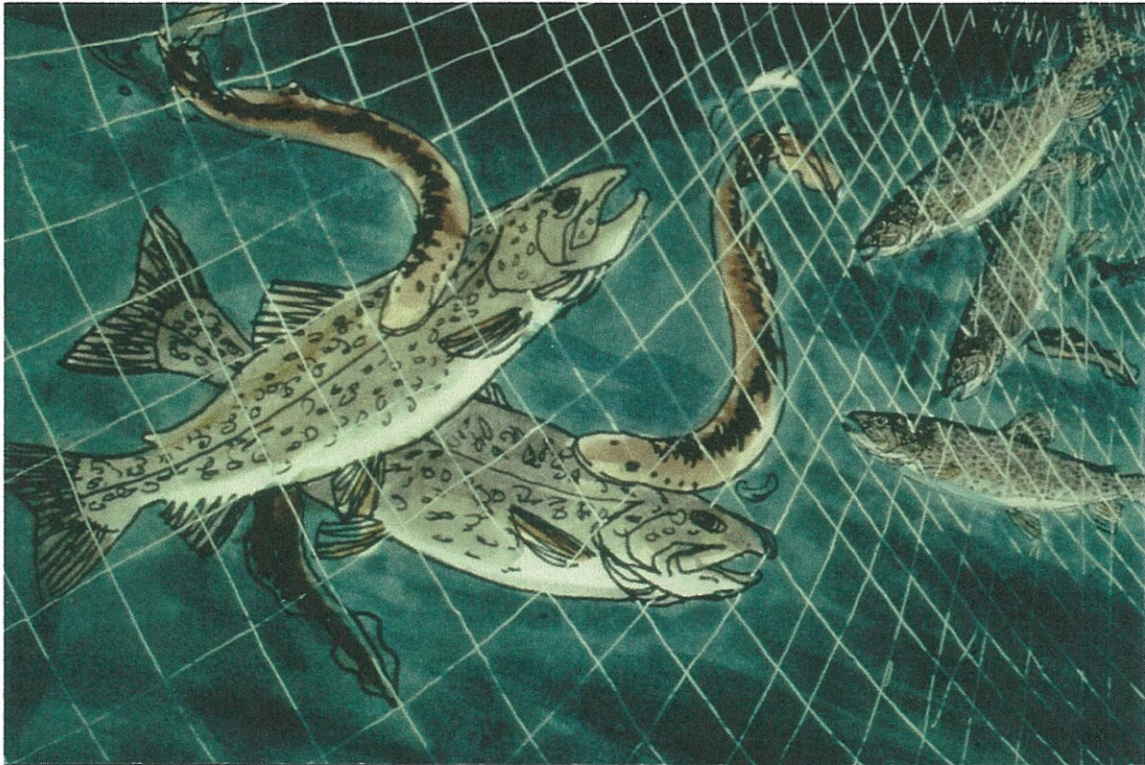
The Welland Canal allowed ocean fish to migrate into the Great Lakes. One of the first evasive species was the lamprey eel. This predator found the abundant supply of lake trout to be an ideal prey fish. The lamprey attached itself to a trout and sucks the blood until it killed its victim.



The Great Lakes Fishery Commission was established in 1956 to control the lampreys. Electronic barriers were used in the streams that housed the spawning lampreys. In 1958, a chemical called TFM was developed and was more efficient than the electronic barriers. All of the streams were treated and the lamprey population started to decline.



Another factor that caused the collapse of the lake trout population was the unregulated commercial fishery. At first, gill nets were made of cotton. With the invention of nylon, the fishermen converted to this new material. Nylon was stronger, required little maintenance and was more efficient in catching fish. The lake trout catch plummeted from over 5 million pounds in 1946 to a mere 402 pounds in 1963.

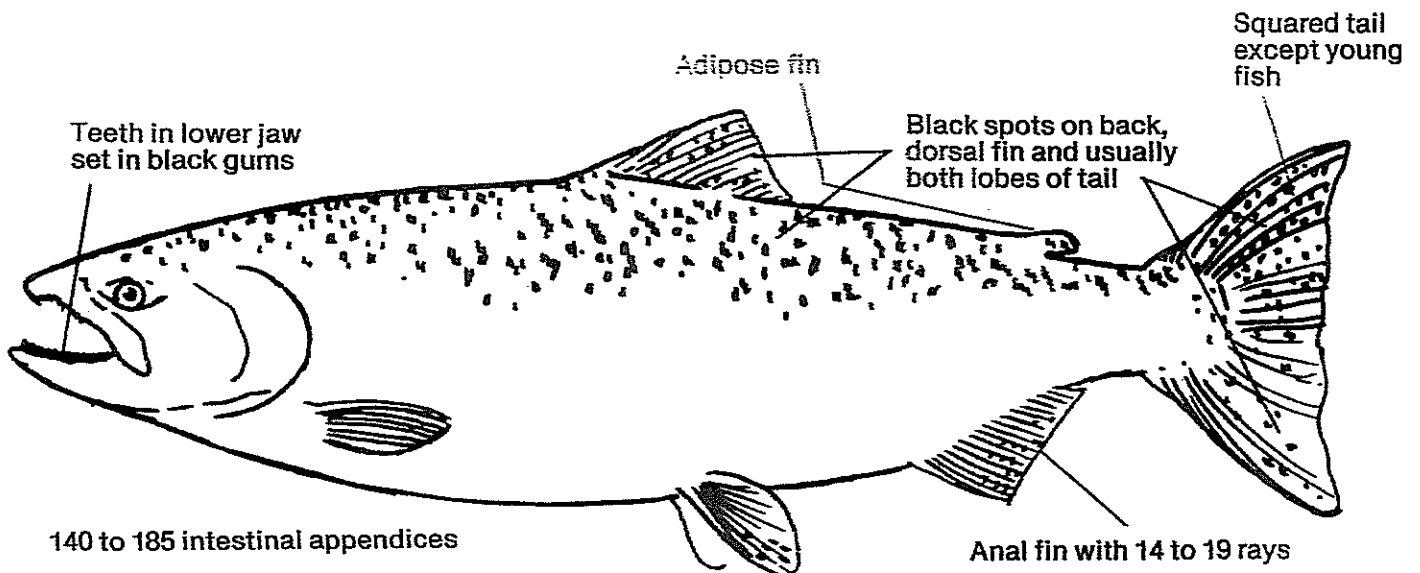
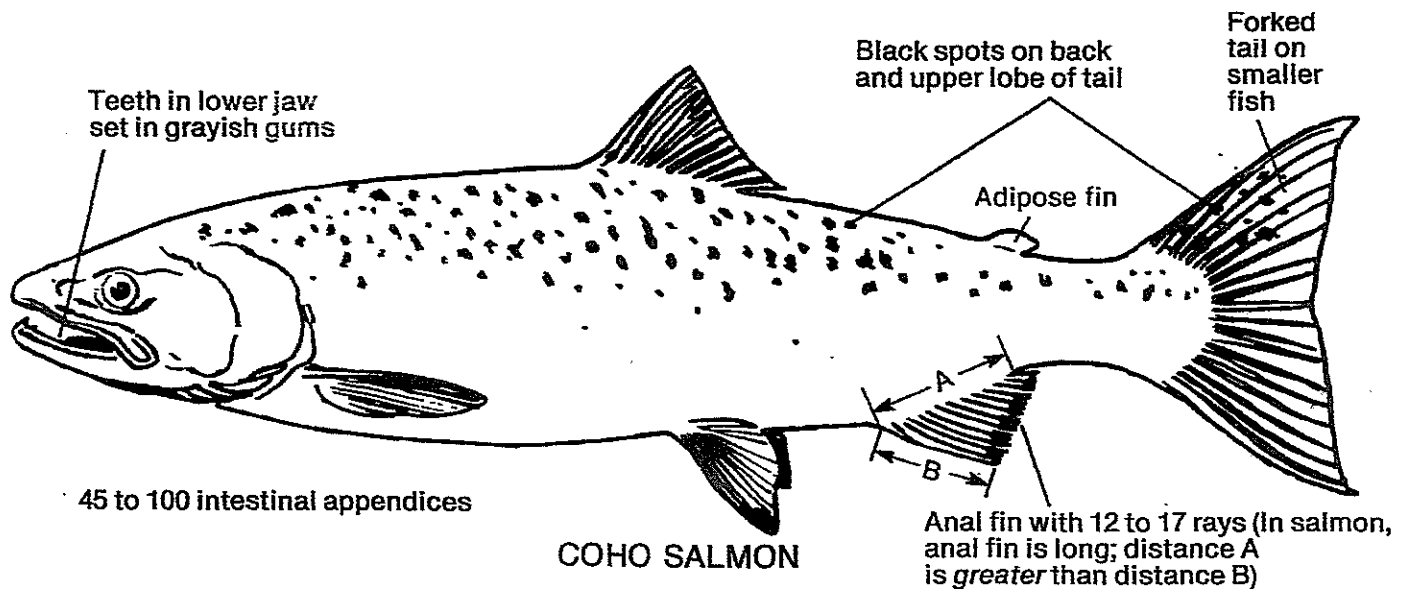


The alewife was another fish that entered the Great Lakes. This specie feeds on plankton which was very abundant in Lake Michigan. With the lack of predators, the alewife population exploded. After a rough winter, the excess population would die off and wash up on the beaches. The stench was so strong that people stopped going to the beach and this affected the economy of Michigan.



In 1965, Dr. Howard Tanner who was in charge of the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources saw an opportunity to take advantage of the alewife infestation and create a sport fishery by introducing Pacific coho salmon in Lake Michigan. He felt that coho's could adapt to a freshwater environment. However it was a gamble since coho salmon have never been permanently established outside its native range.

Many people were against the introduction of any new specie. However, salmon were a voracious predator that could control the alewife population, and are good eating and easier to catch than the deep-dwelling lake trout.



In 1964, the Michigan DNR received one million coho eggs from Oregon's Columbia River. The eggs were taken to the Platte River Hatchery and successfully reared 850,000 fry. In March of 1966, the young smolts were 18 month old and six inches long. They were planted in the Manistee, the Platt, and the big Huron River. In the following year they received one million chinook salmon eggs from the Toutle River in Washington. In April of 1967, they reared and planted chinook smolts in the Muskegon, Little Manistee, and the Big Huron River.

In the seasons that followed, record catches of salmon were commonplace. The coho were averaging 12 to 20 pounds and chinooks over 30 pounds. A coho weighting 30 pound, 9-ounces and a Chinook of 46 pound, 1-ounce broke the Lake Michigan Record. The "salmon fever" was intense and fishermen traveled from all over to Michigan to catch the coho and chinook salmon.



In addition to coho, Chinook, and lake trout, a variety of other salmon and trout species have been stocked, which includes Atlantic salmon, steelhead, brown trout, brook trout, and hybrids like splake (lake trout-brook trout cross) and tiger trout (brown trout-brook trout cross).

Indiana obtained a unique strain of steelhead trout from the Skamania Fish Hatchery in the state of Washington. The hatchery tried an experiment to get the steelheads to start spawning earlier and return at a larger size. When the biologists collected eggs, they only chose the earliest returning, largest fish. This process was repeated for a number of generations, and the steelhead started coming back in the summer instead of the fall and at a larger size. They called them, "Summer Run Skamania Steelheads".

In the summer of 1981, the Skamania steelheads returned to the ports of Indiana and averaged 8 to 12 pounds with many trophies of 15 to 20 pounds. Fishing was fantastic and it was called, "Skamania Mania".



Another fish that was getting a lot of attention in Wisconsin was the Seeforellen which was a giant strain of brown trout. In the Alpine lakes in Germany, a Seeforellen brown trout was caught that weighted 68 pound, 5-ounce. The fish out weighted any brown that was ever registered. Unfortunately, it was caught on a hand line; therefore it is not a rod-and-reel record.

The Seeforellen lives longer than most strains of brown trout and feeds on the abundant goby population. It prefers the shallower waters of Lake Michigan; therefore, it is a very popular fish for the shore fisherman.

New York was the first to obtain this strain and stocked them in Lake Ontario. Wisconsin followed and stocked them in their portion of the lake. These fish provided a great fishery for Wisconsin, and in 2010, a Seeforellen brown was caught in Racine which weighted 41-pound, 8-ounces and became the new rod-and-reel world record.



Salmon Unlimited Involvement in Lake Michigan

Part 2

When the salmon fishery started in Michigan, I went to the Manistee River fishing for Coho's and the Muskegon on the first spawning run of Chinooks. The fishing was spectacular.

In the spring of 1969, the Coho moved off the shores of Indiana and Illinois. The fisherman started buying boats and equipment for salmon fishing. In the Chicago land area there were over 30 tackle stores. Business was booming.

In June of 1971, Norm Haney, who had a TV fishing show had two guests, Ken and Dan Dumong. The two brothers were trying to start a salmon fishing club. "Coho Joe," Sachar, called me and the four of us had a meeting and made plans to start the club. Our goal was the betterment of the Lake Michigan salmon and trout fishery. The club was to be called Salmon Unlimited. Our first meeting was held at the Mint Julep Lounge in Chicago. Tom McNally, the outdoor writer from the Chicago Tribune wrote an article inviting fisherman to attend our meeting.

Over 200 people attended the meeting. We talked about Salmon Unlimited goals and asked the audience to join the club. We also asked for volunteers to serve on the board of directors. To our amazement, just about everybody joined the club, and the enthusiastic, talented and qualified people that served on the board members were overwhelming.

The club grew rapidly with nearly three thousand members. In 1973 two independent Salmon Unlimited clubs were established in Indiana and Wisconsin. Salmon Unlimited became the largest organization of its kind in the Midwest.



Hook 'n' Line

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RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

No. 1

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April, 1972

WAUKEGAN DERBY BEGINS APRIL 29

AFTMA HONORS SALMON UNLIMITED



AFTMA Public Relations Director John Zervas (right) presents commendation to Salmon Unlimited to President Dan DuMong (center) and Vice President Ken DuMong during Sports Show.

Chicago, Ill.

Salmon Unlimited was honored during the recent Chicago Sportsman's & Vacation show by the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA).

John Zervas, AFTMA public relations director, presented a commendation to Salmon Unlimited for its "contribution to the future of sport fishing in America." Accepting on behalf of the organization were Dan DuMong, president, and brother Ken DuMong, vice president.

In addition, Zervas also presented a similar commendation to Salmon Unlimited board member J. Nelson Hinde for his company's efforts.

Big Pond Gives Up Two State Records

Springfield, Ill.

Lake Michigan gave up two Illinois state records during 1971, the Illinois Department of Conservation announced.

The brown trout mark, broken three times during the season, was finally set by Walter Bieszczat of Chicago, with a 13 pound, 5 ounce fish. Ross Roberts, Wilmette, landed a 16 pound,

record set in 1970.

Other Lake Michigan catches which were Illinois' biggest of 1971, though not state records, were: two chinook salmon, weighing 21 pounds, 7 ounces, taken by Timothy Schneider of Skokie and Roy Manley of Zion. Tony Shimkus of Oak Forest boated a 14 pound, 1

Salmon Unlimited Co-Sponsors Coho '72

Waukegan, Ill.

One of the most important dates on a salmon angler's calendar after "ice out," is Coho '72, scheduled to run from April 29 thru May 7 at Waukegan.

Billed as "the world's largest salmon derby," Coho '72 is co-sponsored by THE NEWS-SUN of Waukegan, in conjunction with Salmon Unlimited. This year, Coho '72 is offering more than \$20,000 in prizes.

Last year, more than 2,000 salmon were registered in the contest and nearly 4,000 were caught.

Waukegan's Port Authority has constructed some of the finest boat launching facilities on Lake Michigan. Up to 150 boats can be launched in an hour. In addition, there are two long piers from which fishermen can cast and a number of charter boats available.

No fee is charged for registration. Fishing licenses are available in Coho '72 Headquarters, manned by Salmon Unlimited volunteers, near the launching ramps. Resident licenses are \$2.25 and out-of-state licenses are \$4.25 for the entire season and \$2.25 for 10 days.

There are no launching fees at Waukegan either, but a small charge is collected for day-long parking in the Port Authority Parking Lot.

More than \$20,000 in merchandise prizes will be awarded during the nine-day event. A daily winner and two runners-up will be selected from fishermen weighing in the largest catches.

Three Grand Prizes will be awarded for the three largest salmon.

One-half of the awards, or more than \$10,000 in prizes, will be awarded by drawings held every hour. Each person who registers is eligible for these. The purpose of this is to encourage people to try fishing as a sport.

Waukegan is located about 35 miles north of Chicago and 50 miles south of Milwaukee. Three major highways lead to the city, including U.S. 41, the

As the membership expanded, Salmon Unlimited became very active and offered many benefits for our members. There were two monthly meetings, one on the North side and one in the far South side. Our members were mailed our Hook n' Line newsletter and our telephone hotline informed the public about the current fishing conditions and what was happening in the club. We held fishing clinics and taught the public how to catch the salmon and trout from either a boat or from shore. Other events were family picnics and fishing tournaments. At our annual banquet we gave recognition to our members for outstanding service to the club and awarded trophies for the biggest fish of the year and the winners of the tournaments.

Salmon Unlimited was an action group and met with the director of the conservation and suggested that Illinois start a Lake Michigan salmon program. The director's response was, "we do not have the money, the manpower, and since we do not have any rivers or streams, his feeling was that salmon will not live in our waters of Lake Michigan".

Salmon Unlimited response was, "If we get the money, and provide the manpower, we would like your permission to start a salmon fishery?" The response from the director was, "knock your self out". He never envisioned that we would act on his O.K and take it any farther.

One of our board members, Nelson Hinde, owned a company that manufactured aeration devices for sewerage treatment ponds. Nelson made the suggestion that salmon might be able to survive in the clean, oxygenated and fertile waters of a sewerage pond. Although it was an experiment and a real gamble, we decided to go ahead and proceed with the project, and arrangements were made with a sewerage treatment facility in Waterman Illinois.

Raise salmon in sewage lagoons?

By Bruce Ingersoll

It's a gamble, they admit, but a group of Chicago anglers are betting that chinook salmon and steelhead trout can be raised in sewage lagoons.

Hopefully, the salmon and steelhead fry (newly hatched fish) will thrive on the natural food in six northern Illinois lagoons this winter and be big enough to release into Lake Michigan next May.

The 250 members of Salmon Unlimited have put up an ante of \$2,500 to prove that cold-water game fish can be raised without million-dollar hatcheries.

'Like a clean stream'

"The water of an aerated sewage lagoon rivals that of a clear mountain stream," said J. Nelson Hinde, a Highland Park engineer and a Salmon Unlimited board member.

"It has a high oxygen content and plenty of food organisms — mayfly nymphs, freshwater shrimp and other natural food."

Salmon Unlimited is buying 200,000 chinook fry from the State of Oregon at a cost of a penny per fish. The tiny fish are to be shipped here by plane in mid-December and turned loose in four other lagoons to fend for themselves.

These lagoons receive the outflow from advanced (tertiary) treatment plants and "are clean enough to drink from," Hinde claimed.

Thirty thousand steelhead (rainbow) trout already have been stocked in lagoons at Bartlett and Burlington, Ill.

Come spring, the chinook "smolts" and six-inch steelheads will be turned loose along the Illinois shore of Lake Michigan. The biggest batch — half of the chinooks that survive the winter — will be dumped into the Waukegan harbor.

This experiment is not without precedent, Hinde said. Largemouth bass and bluegills have been raised in aerated lagoons in Illi-

nois, and Canadian and Alaskan fish experts have experimented with trout and salmon.

"We think this (experiment) is a better than a longshot," Hinde said. "If it works, anybody will be able to catch chinook salmon — the king of them all — from breakwaters and beaches in Chicago."

Some early-maturing male salmon — known as "jacks" — will be showing up in the fall of 1974, Hinde said. The majority, however, won't return to the Illinois shore until a year later. They will go 20 to 30 pounds, he added.

The salmon anglers are convinced the fish can be raised in the lagoons at one-tenth the cost of hatchery fish. This is possible, Hinde said, because Salmon Unlimited will supply the manpower and the fish don't have to be fed eight times a day.

"The Chicago area can become the fishing capital of the Great Lakes," he said. "There are enough lagoons in Illinois to raise four million a year."

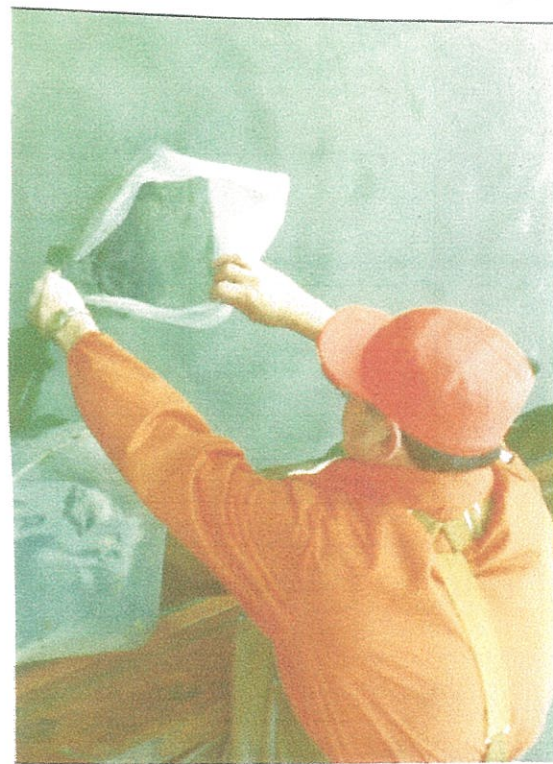
State has own program

Not to be upstaged, the Illinois Conservation Department is undertaking its own chinook-stocking program.

Lacking a suitable river for spawning runs, the state will build a fish ladder and a holding pond in Illinois Beach State Park at Zion to accommodate the chinook's primordial urge to return to its birthplace, reproduce and die.

Chinooks being hatched from 180,000 eggs — a gift from the State of Michigan — will be transferred from the state's Spring Grove hatchery to the pond in March, said Paul Vidal, a fisheries biologist.

The fish will be kept there for two months — long enough, Vidal said, to "memorize" the peculiar scent of the well water pumped into the pond and discharged down the fish ladder to the lake. In May, they will be released.



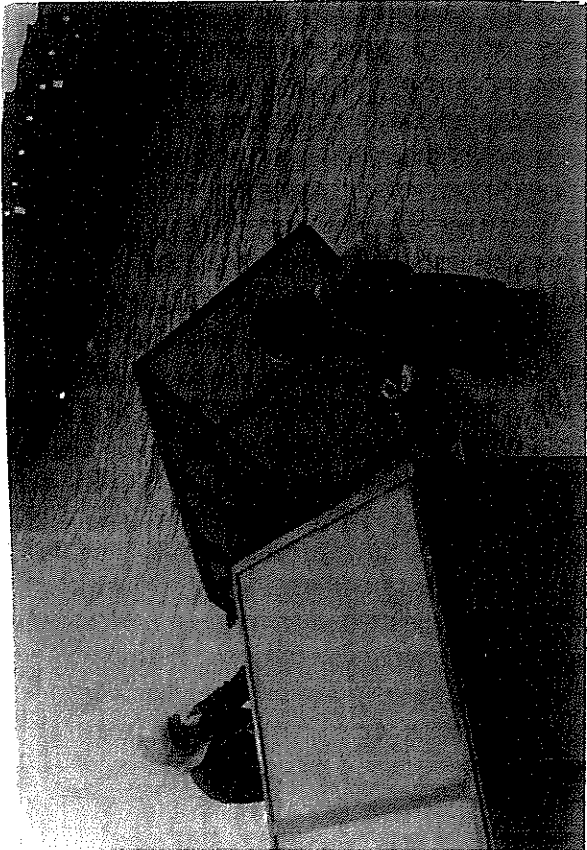
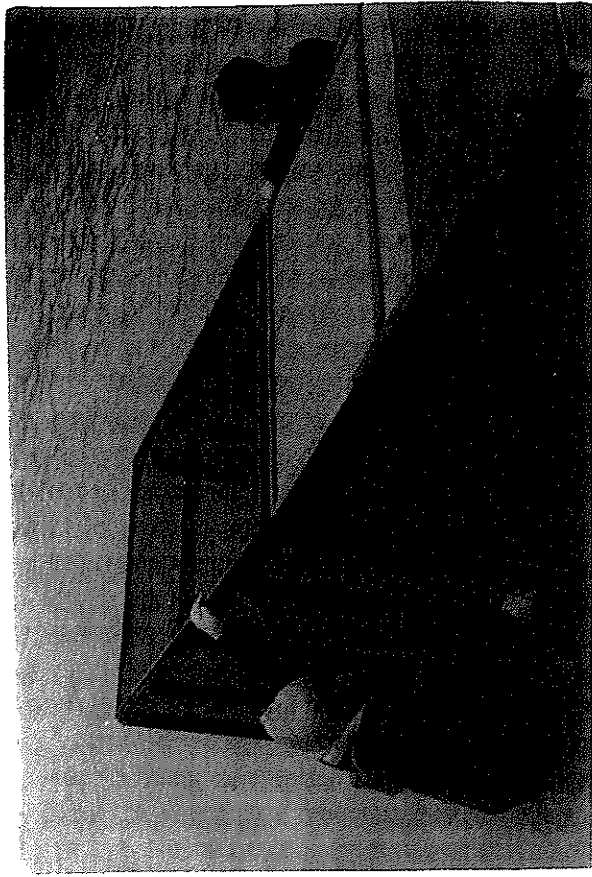
Salmon Unlimited tries an experiment to raise salmon in sewage pond at Waterman Illinois

The membership of Salmon Unlimited raised \$3,000 and in 1971 purchased 200,000 Chinook salmon fry that were shipped and planted in a lagoon at the Waterman sewage treatment facility. It was hoped that the fertile waters of the lagoon would provide enough natural food to grow the fry to a stage where they could be planted in Lake Michigan. The experimental project did not succeed, however it drew national attention and for its efforts, Salmon Unlimited received an award from the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers (AFTMA) for its "contribution to the future of sport fishing in America".

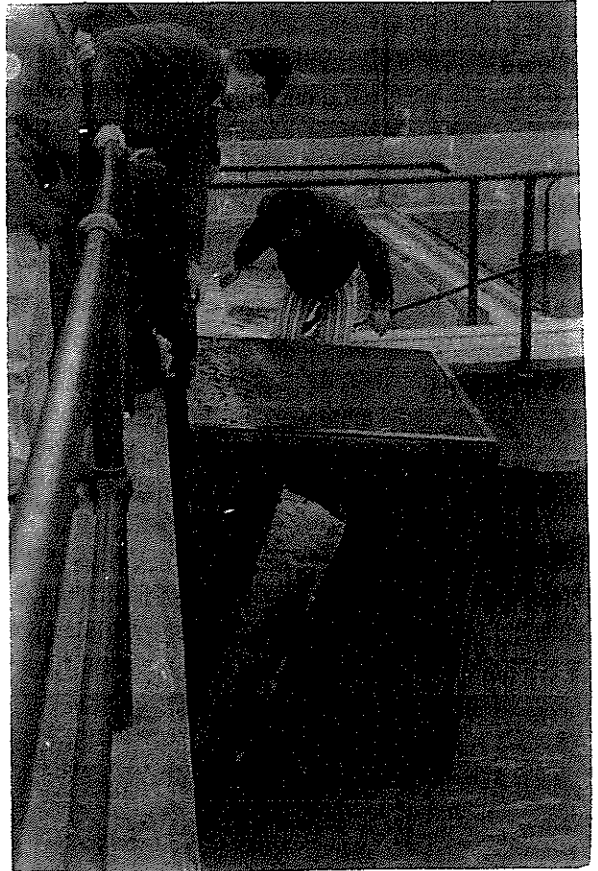
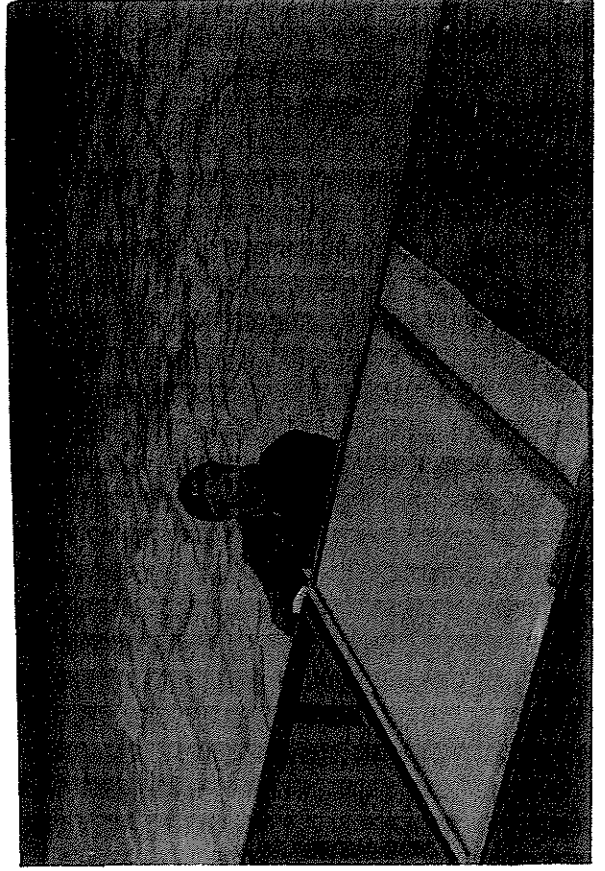
It also motivated the Illinois DNR to become involved in the Lake Michigan Fishery. Mike Conlin, Supervisor of the Division of Fisheries for Illinois, stated, "They're responsible for getting us off our butts and become more involved in the Lake Michigan fishery. They not only talked about wanting better fishing, they put their money where their mouth is. I've never worked with a group that is more dynamic than Salmon Unlimited. We have a very close rapport with them.

Not discouraged by its early setback, Salmon Unlimited launched another project in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Conservation. Because the Illinois shores of Lake Michigan did not have any tributary streams, it was not known if salmon fry would survive if they were planted in the open lake. The next experiment was to try stocking the fry in cages and feed them so they could adapt and become imprinted better in the harbors environment.

Salmon Unlimited raised \$7,000 and purchased 150,000 Chinook fry from the State of Michigan. They members volunteered and built 18 "imprinting" cages. They fed the fry three times daily for six weeks, and fin-clipped more than 80,000 for identification purposes. The young fry doubled in size. They were in great shape and were ready to be released into Lake Michigan.



Net pens were used at the start of the salmon stocking program. With the cooperation of the Illinois DNR, Salmon Unlimited built and supplied the funds for starting the fishery. The pens in the picture were at Tower Road in Winnetka, Illinois.



In 1973, Salmon Unlimited, and the Illinois Department of Conservation, successfully released 150,000 Chinook smolts into Diversey harbor. Chicago's Mayor, Richard J. Daley loved fishing and went salmon fishing on charters. At the release ceremony, the Mayor released the first. Salmon Unlimited was honored by the Illinois Wildlife Federation for starting the salmon fishery in Lake Michigan. That year Salmon Unlimited also helped form the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council, which was a four state confederation of salmon and trout fisherman.

In 1974, Salmon Unlimited raised \$15,000 and purchased 319,000 Chinooks for stocking in Chicago and Waukegan harbor. Salmon Unlimited was honored by the Illinois House of representatives who adopted resolution (HR958) commending Salmon Unlimited for their "outstanding efforts in the field of conservation and making Lake Michigan the sport fishing capital of the Midwest."

Also in 1974, commercial fishing was running rampant in Lake Michigan. Salmon Unlimited played a role in obtaining an administrative order with stricter enforcement by banning the catch of salmon, lake trout, and whitefish by the Illinois commercial fisherman.

In 1975, at a Salmon Unlimited meeting, the speaker was Tony Dean, the new director of the Illinois Conservation Dept. A request was made "that Illinois needed to build a fish hatchery." Tony Dean's response was "Would Salmon Unlimited support a license increase from the current fee of \$2.00 to \$4.00?" Everybody raised their hands to support an increase. Tony Dean then asked, "Would Salmon Unlimited support a \$2.00 salmon stamp?" The response from the group was, "We would support the salmon stamp if the money goes into the salmon fishery".

After the meeting, plans were made to build a 10 million dollar fish hatchery to produce 48 million fish in 15 varieties.



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MEETING NOTICES**

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Hot Line 312-282-7100

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No. 80

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February-March, 1980

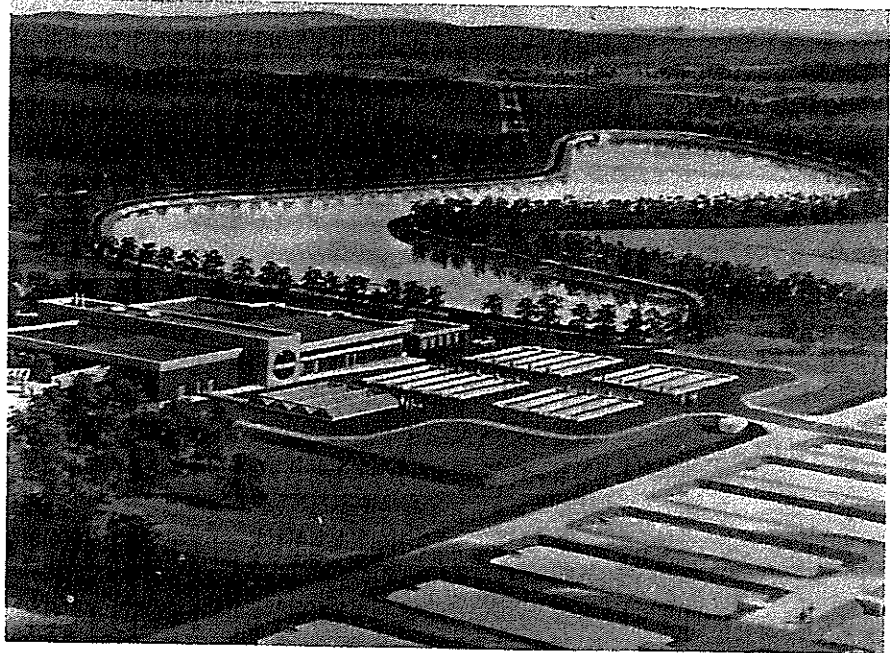
ILLINOIS FISH HATCHERY SYSTEM

The Illinois Department of Conservation and the Capital Development Board and the design engineering firm of Kramer, Chin and Mayo have developed plans for the construction of a new Illinois Fish Hatchery System consisting of construction of a new, modern fish hatchery at Sand Ridge State Forest near Peoria, and renovation and expansion of the Little Grassy Hatchery near Carbondale.

The new Illinois Fish Hatchery System annually will produce 48,035,000 fish of 15 different species that will include cold, cool and warmwater varieties. The annual production from the new Fish Hatchery System will meet projected long-range fish stocking needs required to maintain quality sport fishing for the next fifty years.

Central to the entire planning and development of the new fish hatchery system is the use of modern intensive fish culture technology. Intensive fish culture produces fish

(Continued on page 2)



Well folks, this is what it will look like—our SAND RIDGE FISH HATCHERY, and it's about time! Photos from the groundbreaking ceremonies can be found inside.

Special Notices

S.U. OFFERS 1980 ILLINOIS FISHING LICENSES, SALMON STAMPS AT MEETINGS & OFFICE

Beginning with the February general meeting, Salmon Unlimited is offering 1980 Illinois Fishing Licenses and Salmon Stamps for sale. You can help support your club by buying 1980 Salmon Stamps and Fishing Licenses from S.U. while attending the general meetings or by calling the S.U. Office at PEG-5757, Tuesday through Thursday, 10-3.

MARCH 1ST AWARDS BANQUET GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Banquet tickets may be purchased from Gene Schneider at the S.U. general meeting or by calling OR5-6397. You can also call Jean Sims at RO3-4949 for tickets. Tickets are \$20.00 each. Lots of awards, tons of fine food and dancing until ...? March 1st is the date. Join Chicagoland celebrities at this event.

COMING EVENTS

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Feb. 20 | Board of Directors Meeting at S.U. Office | Mar. 31 | Illinois Fishing License Expires |
| Feb. 26 | S.U. Meeting 8 p.m. at Antoin's [nominations] | April 16 | Fishing Seminar 8 p.m. at Antoin's |
| Mar. 1 | Annual Awards Banquet at Antoin's | * | Great Lakes Sports Fishing Council Quarterly Meeting, Indiana |
| Mar. 16 | Shore Tournament 95th St., Chicago | April 19 | Boat Tournament Michigan City, Indiana |
| Mar. 19 | Board of Directors Meeting at S.U. Office | | |
| Mar. 25 | S.U. Meeting 8 p.m. at Antoin's [swap shop]** | * To Be Announced | |
| Mar. 29 | Shore Tournament Montrose Harbor, Chicago | **U.S. Coast Guard Water Survival Presentation | |

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY SAND RIDGE FISH HATCHERY



Ground is broken for the Sand Ridge Fish Hatchery, December 3, 1979. In the photo shown above, Governor Thompson (left) and Salmon Unlimited President Ed Makauskas "make it official." The Governor gave this project his full support—for which we say "thanks."

The photo at the right shows John T. Case and S.U. President Ed Makauskas "shoveling dirt at your editor" during the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Sand Ridge Fish Hatchery.



COHO JOE'S APRIL LAKE MICHIGAN PREDICTIONS

The water in the southern end of the Lake is now beginning to warm up. Cohos are moving in from deeper waters, a few Chinooks, enough to make it worth while to fish for them will also move in. A stray number of rainbows and browns will also move in.

Most of the fishing will be concentrated around the southern end of Indiana waters with the Jeorose Park area in Indiana Harbor becoming the top producer.

The preponderant bulk of our catches will be Cohos running from 1½ to 3 pounds with an occasional

from 2 to 18 pounds. Rainbows and browns will average around 4 pounds.

Since the water temperatures from top to bottom will vary very little, we will be doing most of our fishing in the top 8 feet, but we must not discount fishing deeper. Most of the fishing will be done with a slow troll but on any given day it may be necessary to speed up the troll.

From Jeorose Park the fishing will cover an area from five miles north on the Indiana side to the Calumet Park area in Illinois. All of

shore in waters from 35 feet deep and less. I predict the Coho and Chinook catch will be as good as last spring. Trout action will be sporadic with most trout being caught in Indiana waters.

Shore fishermen will be doing good around Calumet Harbor and on any given day the Coho fishing will be hot all along the Chicago shoreline. Practically all of the fish will be caught by power lines baited with nightcrawlers or small alewives. The power lines will be fished in the top 6 feet of water, but some fishermen may fish near the

The Illinois DNR had limited access to Lake Michigan since they only had a 14 foot aluminum boat. Salmon Unlimited solved this problem by purchasing a 24 foot Stamas boat and donated it to the Conservation Department for the research that was needed on the Lake Michigan fishery.

In 1975, Salmon Unlimited raised money and purchased 100,000 normal rainbows and 100,000 golden rainbows from the Rushing Waters Trout Farm in Wisconsin.

In 1976, Salmon Unlimited purchased 65,000 Coho smolts from a hatchery in Bremerton Washington. The fish were trucked over 2500 miles and successfully stocked in Chicago and Waukegan harbor. Also, in 1976, the first salmon stamp was issued in Illinois to help fund the salmon program.

In 1977, Salmon Unlimited purchased 80,000 rainbow trout from a hatchery in Peterson, Minnesota that were trucked into Chicago and Mayor Mike Bilandic released the first fish. The Mayor honored Salmon Unlimited by naming July as "Salmon Unlimited Month".

In 1978, Salmon Unlimited again purchased 225,000 Chinooks from the state of Washington. This was the first time that fish of this size and quantity were transported by air. In the fall they also stocked 1,600 tiger trout and 12,000 brook trout off the shores of Evanston.

In 1980, at the ground breaking ceremony for the new hatchery, Salmon Unlimited was presented a gold shovel. Governor Thompson thanked Salmon Unlimited for our support in starting the Lake Michigan sports fishery. The hatchery was later named the Jacob Wolf Hatchery and now provides all of the salmon and trout that are stocked in Lake Michigan. Each year the members of Salmon Unlimited go to the hatchery and participate in fin clipping the young salmon and trout before being released in Lake Michigan.

program that measures fish species' success in Lake Michigan

hatchery manager Steve Krueger, with net, said of the volunteers, "They are a dedicated group of anglers who put their m



xel Denk, right, of Chicago and Patti Zollers, second from right, of Elgin are among the volunteers from Salmon Unlimited Inc. of Illinois who made the three-hour drive to clip the fins of about 70,000 small fish this year.



ean Sliwa, center, of Chicago tosses a young trout into a tank after clipping its fins. Sliwa organizes the yearly trips to help mark fish at the Jake Wolf Memorial Fish Hatchery.

Although the volunteers marked 70,000 trout, Krueger predicts only 60,000 or so will make it to Chicago. The rest will be lost to hungry birds feeding from the 12,000-gallon concrete tanks or "raceways" outside at the hatchery be-

TOPEKA, Ill. — Jean Sliwa grabbed a slippery 3-inch rainbow trout from a trough of chilly water in front of her, cupped it in her palm and in seconds clipped two tiny fins from it, then tossed it into a 1,100-gallon tank to swim away seemingly undeterred.

On each side of her, fishing buddies did the same, all day long, as they have every year for more than 30 years.

Forty-two members of Chicago-based Salmon Unlimited Inc. of Illinois and about 15 other volunteers clipped about 70,000 small fish one day earlier this month at central Illinois' Jake Wolf Memorial Fish Hatchery.

The marked trout, as well as salmon also produced at the hatchery, will be stocked in Lake Michigan in May, and the ones that are eventually caught will help biologists study the growth, movement and survival rate of the fish.

"I do this fin clip for the future generations, so the kids are able to enjoy the fishing like we have," said Sliwa, 76, drying her hands to show pictures of the 21-pound rainbow trout she pulled out of the lake and mounted on the wall of her Chicago home.

"Like I've said before, if I'm not fishin' they might as well be diggin' (my grave)."

Sliwa and fellow members of the club travel every March to Jake Wolf, the largest of the state's three fish hatcheries, 45 miles south of Peoria. There they assist in the annual clipping of designated fins — the left pectoral and right ventral this year — from small rainbow trout that will be stocked in Lake Michigan when they have grown from 3 inches to about 6.

The club's trip on St. Patrick's Day drew a record number of volunteers including a couple of young anglers who got to skip school to help out.

They sat on folding chairs. Some, like Sliwa, were propped up on salt bags to soften their seat.

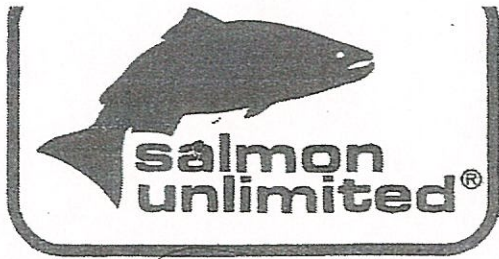
"It's a good three-hour drive but all I have to say is 'fin clip' and they say

Fish biologist and hatchery manager Steve Krueger said without the help, he and his staff of 11, reduced from 26 because of state budget cuts and attrition, would spend weeks scratching this chore off the list.

"They are a dedicated group of anglers who put their money where their mouth is," he said. "If we had to do it all ourselves we would only have increments of time between other daily jobs. They knock it out in 7½ or eight hours."

Krueger said the rainbow trout they clipped represent one of five cold-water species being raised at Jake Wolf to be stocked in Lake Michigan harbors.

This spring they also expect to release about 230,000 chinook salmon, which are tagged at the hatchery by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and 300,000 coho salmon. In the summer and fall, about 100,000 brown trout and 50,000 steelhead trout are expected to be released into



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9144 Crescent Drive
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April, 1976

SU Plants 65,000 Coho in Lake

Chicago, Ill. — More than 65,000 young coho salmon "migrated" over 2,250 miles from Rochester, Wash., to the Illinois waters of Lake Michigan this spring. The 4- to 7-inch fish were carefully transported by tanker truck in the largest overland journey of its kind.

The silvery smolts were purchased by Salmon Unlimited and stocked in Lake Michigan in a cooperative effort by Illinois Department of Conservation biologists.

The 15-month-old salmon, bought from Mariculture Northwest, a Rochester firm, were delivered to Illinois in two shipments. Each trip from the West Coast took about 60 hours.

"Salmon Unlimited contacted 14 companies before Pappas Fish Haulers of Toledo, Ohio, accepted the contract. The others refused for fear of losing the fish," said SU president Ken Dumong. "No one had ever transported coho salmon of this size so far before. Even Pappas wouldn't guarantee live delivery, but they were confident of successfully doing the job," he added.

The first shipment of 32,650 coho arrived on March 27 in Waukegan, Ill., where they were released into the lake south of the harbor's breakwater. Biologists estimated fish losses at 10 per cent.

On April 5, the second shipment of 32,650 fish arrived in Chicago, and were planted in Diversey Harbor. Losses this time were less than 100 fish.

"Our original plan called for 100,000 coho salmon," Dumong pointed out. "But due to truck weight restrictions in states along the way, we were forced to

reduce the loads by reducing the number of fish."

Supervising the journey of the salmon was Harry Wight, Lake Michigan fishery biologist for the Illinois conservation department. Wight made two flights to the West Coast to ride herd on the traveling coho during their 2½-day drive to the Midwest.

The coho salmon stocked by Salmon Unlimited are a hardy strain from the Columbia River and are comparable, according to Dumong, to the first coho planted by the state of Michigan in 1967.

"We expect these coho to grow into large adults just like the first returns of mature fish in Lake Michigan," he said. "Recently, adult coho have been weighing only 4 to 10 pounds apiece. These Columbia River fish, hopefully, will weigh 10 to 20 pounds."

The cost of Salmon Unlimited's 1976 stocking program was \$22,000. Including this spring's project, SU has spent — since 1972 — more than \$85,000 to buy 716,300 salmon and trout. In 1973 and 1974, the organization purchased a total of 415,000 Chinook, or king, salmon. In 1975, it continued on page 2



It's a fish of another hue for city

A CHICAGO-AREA fishermen's group dedicated to making Chicago the "salmon capital of the world" decided Saturday there are times when it's better to switch than fight.

Members of Salmon Unlimited had intended to stock Lake Michigan with 100,000 salmon Saturday.

Instead, they put in 80,000 rainbow trout.

"We tried to bring in salmon from Washington state earlier this year, but most of them died in the truck," said "Coho" Joe Sachar, vice president of Salmon Unlimited. "Hatcheries told us trout survive the travel and heat better."

AND INDEED, with Mayor Bilandic on hand to throw out the first fish—a hefty two-foot long living trout—nearly all the trout began swimming as soon as they hit the lake water.

Except for the first fish, most in the batch were 4 to 6 inches long. "They'll be as big as the first one within a year," Sachar said.

The fish came from Peterson, Minn., by tank truck. As the truck pulled to the water's edge next to the Chicago Park District office in Belmont Harbor, a welcoming group including Bilandic; Stanton R. Cook, publisher of The Chicago Tribune; and Bob Sirott, WLS disc jockey, gathered on a small yellow barge nearby.



The Illinois Salmon Stamp was started in 1976 and was used to help fund the salmon and trout fishery in Lake Michigan. In 1976 a fishing license and salmon stamp each cost \$2.00.





OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

MICHAEL A. BILANDIC
MAYOR

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS, July is the seventh anniversary of the founding of Salmon Unlimited, a not-for-profit organization devoted to preserving, improving, and enjoying Great Lakes salmon and trout fishing; and

WHEREAS, the organization is Chicago-based and has at this time a membership of nearly 2,000 fishing families, with clubs in the neighboring states of Indiana and Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Salmon Unlimited has in several years past financed and directed the stocking of Lake Michigan with coho and chinook salmon and with golden rainbow trout; and

WHEREAS, Salmon Unlimited has been active in conservation efforts and has sponsored annual fishing tournaments and awards dinners; and

WHEREAS, an aim of the organization is to make Chicago the "Salmon Fishing Capital of the World":

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michael A. Bilandic, Mayor of the City of Chicago, do hereby proclaim July, 1978, to be SALMON UNLIMITED MONTH IN CHICAGO and urge all citizens to take cognizance of the activities of this organization.

Dated this 5th day of July, 1978.

Michael A. Bilandic

Mayor

The Great Lakes Fishery is Changing

There are many factors that are changing the fishery. At one time the Great Lakes were fertile bodies of water with a large fish population. When the lamprey and alewives entered, the situation changed. The lamprey wiped out the trout population and the chemical TFM was used to control the lampreys and coho and then chinook salmon were introduced to control the alewives. Because of the plentiful forage base, the salmon grew large and a great managed world class fishery was created.

Concerns and solutions

(1) The shipping industry allowed boats coming from the ocean to exchange their ballast water and as a result, introduced over 200 invasive species to the Great Lakes. The zebra and quagga mussels made the greatest impact by filtering out the plankton which is the food that alewives and young fish need to survive. A specie that has drastically declined is the diporeia. This small shrimp like crustacean which is the size of a grain of rice, was a major source of food for the fish population. Fish cannot survive without food, and as the forage base shrinks all the fish are impacted. The salmon have gotten smaller, and the perch fishery is declining.

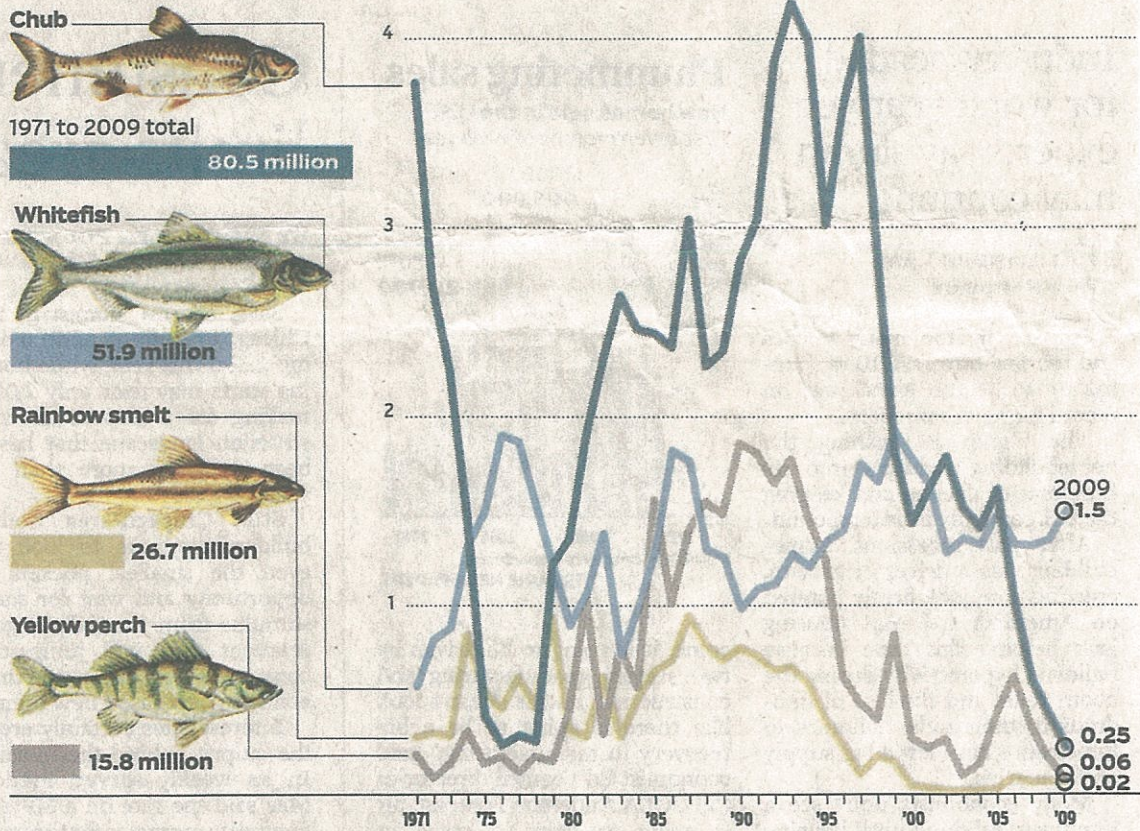
Strict controls must be made in the shipping industry with enforcement on ships that are allowed to change ballast water. Any exchanges must be done in the open ocean, and disinfectants could be added to kill any freshwater organisms that they might be transporting. We do not know what might be happening in the future. We are playing Russian roulette with the most valuable resource in the world, which is our supply of freshwater. Any ship that violates the regulations should face severe penalties.

The decline of a once-great fishery

Fish stocks in Lake Michigan have had peaks and valleys in the past century, but the lake always had sustained large enough numbers of the four species below to maintain a viable commercial fishery. But the recent plummet in the chub catch rate has happened at the same time there has been a surge in invasive mussels, and biologists are wondering if a comeback is even possible.

Four species of commercial fish

With amount harvested in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan waters, in millions of pounds

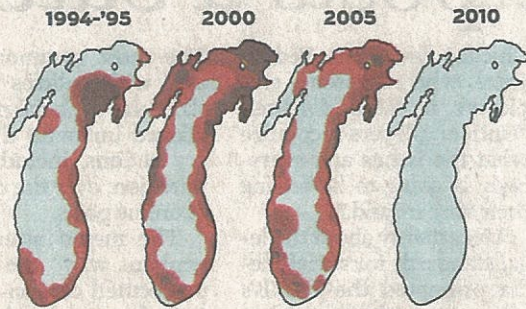


Invasive threat to Lake Michigan

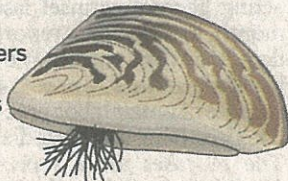
Zebra mussels were once the dominant invasive species, but they have been virtually eliminated by their close relative, the quagga mussel. In just a decade, the mollusks have depleted much of the plankton that sustained a healthy commercial fishery.

Mussel density per square meter: 100 (light red), 1,000 (red), 10,000 (dark red), 100,000 (black)

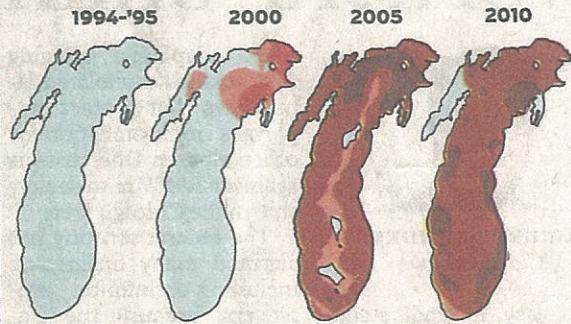
Zebra mussel



Size: up to 5 centimeters
Native to: Black, Caspian and Azov seas



Quagga mussel

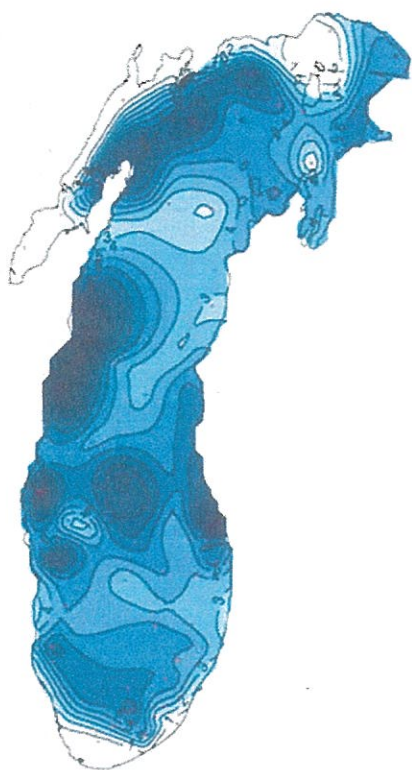


Size: up to 4 centimeters
Native to: Dnieper River drainage of Ukraine

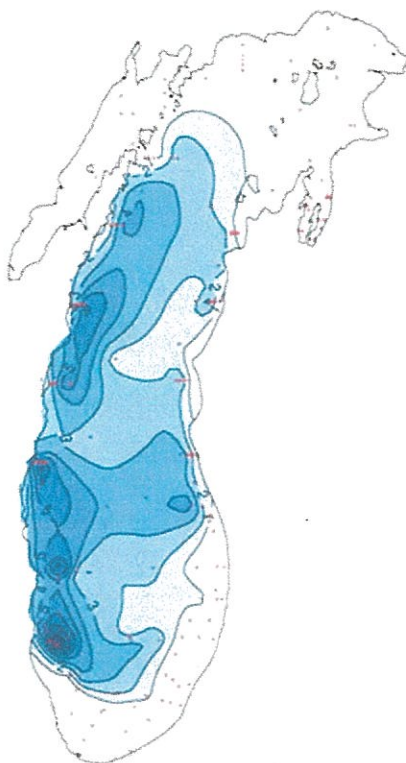


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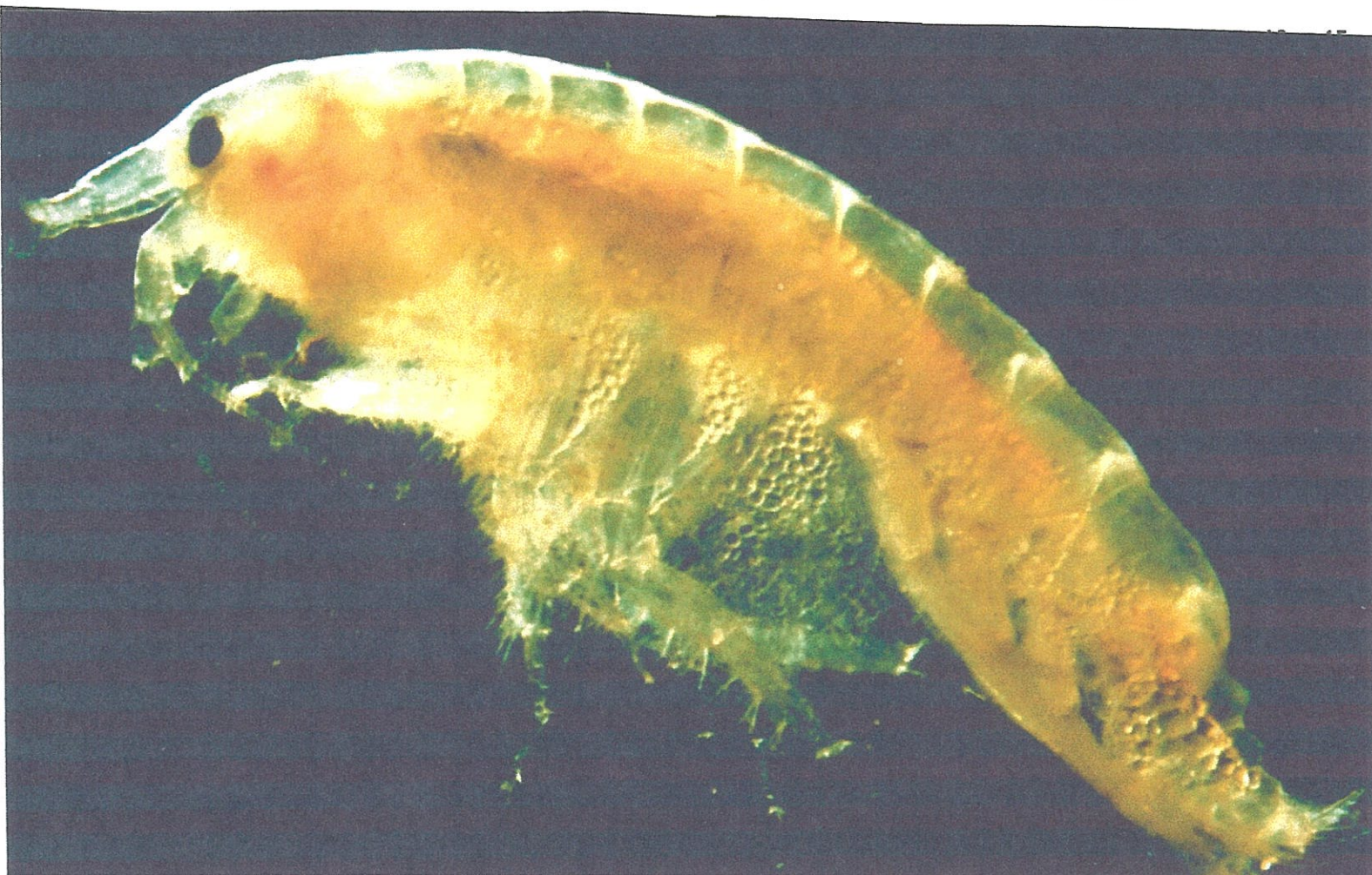
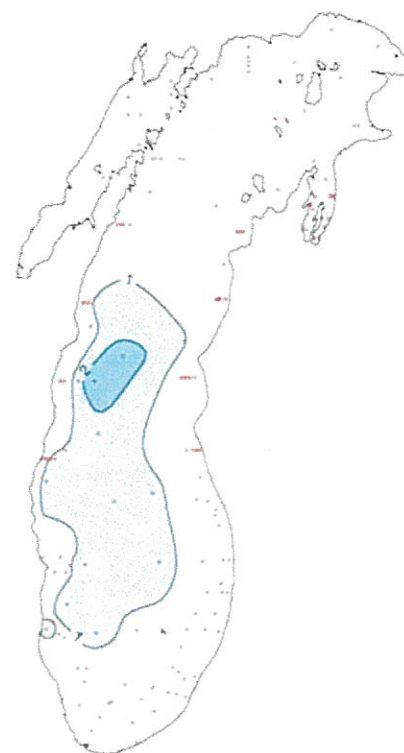
1994-1995



2000



2005



(2) When Pacific salmon were stocked in Lake Michigan by fish hatcheries, it was thought that there would not be any natural reproduction. A fin clipping and tagging study was used to track and gain more information on the stocked fish.

A study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shows that today, 50% of the salmon are wild fish that have naturally reproduced in the streams of Michigan and Lake Huron. When the young fry leave the streams, they follow the forage and migrate to lower Wisconsin and Illinois which still has the biggest alewife population. This may provide a good spring and summer fishery, however, when the fish leave and return to their home streams to spawn, the fishing in Southern Wisconsin and Illinois declines.

In order to control the salmon population from depleting the alewife population, a decision was made to reduce the amount of hatchery produced salmon.

In Illinois, all of our fish are hatchery raised since we do not have any natural streams. If we cut back on our stocking numbers, this will affect our late summer and fall fishing. This is especially true in our shore fishing which is getting poorer and poorer each year.

It is my opinion that we should manage our fishery like we did in the past. Today, we have the hatchery systems that can produce enough fish to control the alewife population and provide great fishing. The wild fish are not needed and must be controlled since they are reducing the forage base. Instead of reducing the hatchery fish, we should install weirs on the rivers that are producing the wild salmon and the surplus fish can be sold for food or be used as fertilizer.

(3) When the Illinois Department of Conservation releases young salmon and trout fry from the Jacob Wolf Hatchery, they are trucked and dumped directly into the harbors of Lake Michigan. The young fry are stocked during the day and become disorientated in their new environment and the seagulls and the predator fish in the harbors eat a good portion of the young fry. The young fry then must convert from a hatchery diet to natural forage. The lakes have changed and the forage base is very scarce. If the fry can not find enough food, they will starve. It's only a guess on how many of the fish manage to survive. If we reduce the number of fish that we stock, we must make sure they have the best chance to survive.

When the Illinois fishery was started, we did not know if the stocked salmon could survive or imprint. As an experiment, Salmon Unlimited built floating net pens and fed the young fry for six weeks. They became imprinted and doubled in size, and had a much better chance of survival. Today, most of the state hatcheries are using net pens, and it has been proven that the survival and imprinting is far superior.

It is my opinion my feelings, as a test project, perhaps, 1/3 of the fish could be stocked, and fed in aerated net pens. These fish would have a different coded tag from the rest of the stocked fish. A study can evaluate the survival and returns, verses the fish that are just dumped in the lake.

This is probably the amount of fish that are eaten by the seagulls. Net Pens are being used successfully by other states and should be tried again in Illinois under the supervision of the Illinois DNR and Salmon Unlimited. The cost and manpower needed to build the pens, and feed the fry could be picked up by Salmon unlimited, or from the salmon stamp money collected by the Illinois DNR.

Net Pens for **MORE SALMON**

Your club can help ensure plenty will return to your favorite port. *By Mike Gnatkowski*

After bacterial kidney disease helped crash the salmon fishing win the late 1980s, fishery managers needed a program for recovery. Hatcheries could hatch, but the challenge was helping the little critters grown to a size where they had a better chance to survive in the wild. Enter net pens.

Net pens are large cages constructed of PVC pipe or aluminum frames with small-diameter mesh to hold tiny salmon. The pens generally measure 6 feet wide by 5 feet deep and up to 10 feet long and can hold up to 30,000 fingerlings from two to four weeks. During this period, the fingerlings get fed and "smolt," and are ready to head out to the fresh water sea. They are then released into the lake or lower portions of the river.

Young salmon must find food a short time after being planted or they will starve. Smolts thrive on protein-rich terrestrial insects found on the surface of the lake, but sometimes offshore winds or cool weather can make the bugs scarce.

In net pens, the fish immediately

It's hard to believe that these tiny salmon fingerlings could grow into a 30-pound trophy in four short years. Tiny salmon fingerlings double in length and triple in weight before they are released.

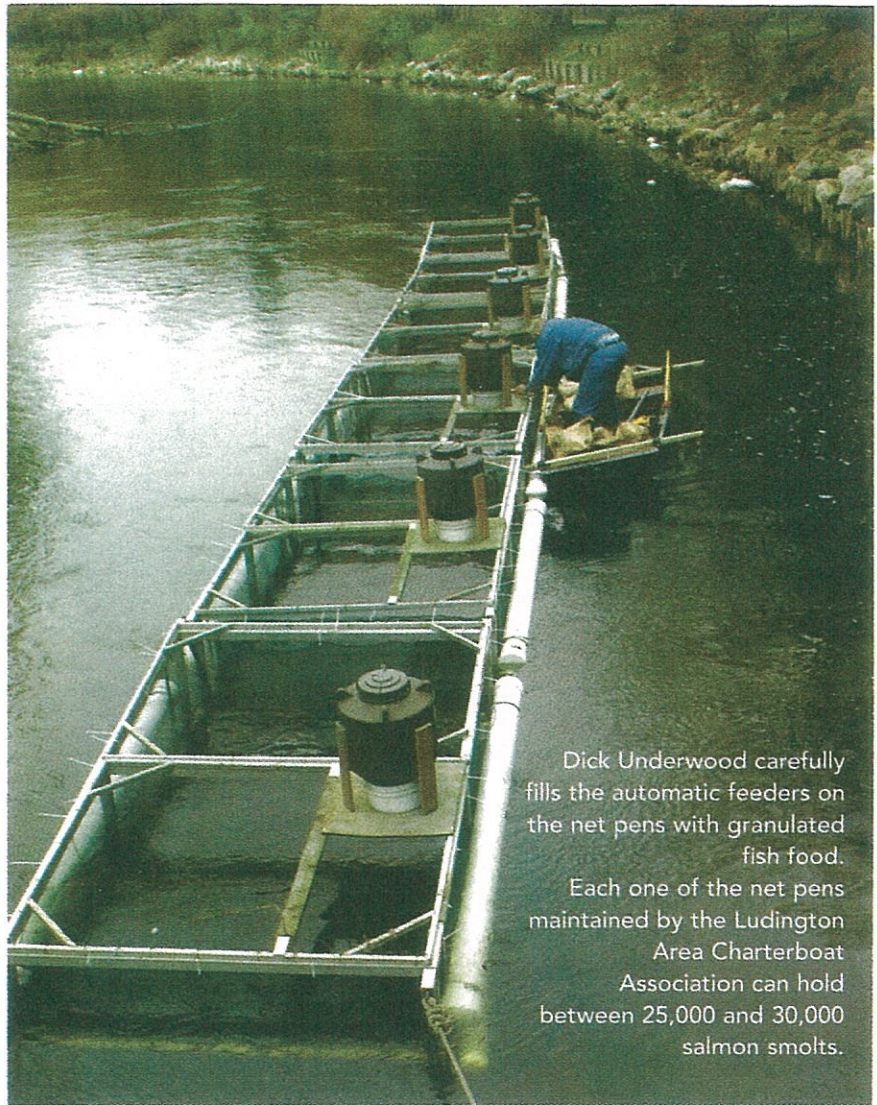


receive fine, energy-rich granulated food. They feed ravenously and grow quickly. Studies show that smolts held in net pens typically double in length and triple in weight. They are in much better shape to make it to the big lake.

Holding the tiny salmon in net pens also imprints them better on that particular stream, increasing the likelihood that they'll return to the planting site.

Salmon dumped off the end of the boat ramp are disoriented, starving and easy prey for birds and other predators. Net pen salmon tell their caretakers when it's time to go. The bundles of silver energy cluster at the downstream end of the enclosures and jump relentlessly. Rather just being dumped and allowed to fend for themselves the salmon leave the pens at their leisure, often under the cover of darkness. There is no mass exodus that attracts predators.

"We've been actively using net pens since the early 1990s," said Jim Dexter, Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator for the Michigan DNR, noting that pens are in place in at least eight Lake Michigan rivers and at least three on Lake Huron. "The fish that are raised in net pens just survive much better. The survival rate for the net-penned fish versus traditional plants



Dick Underwood carefully fills the automatic feeders on the net pens with granulated fish food. Each one of the net pens maintained by the Ludington Area Charterboat Association can hold between 25,000 and 30,000 salmon smolts.

Badger View

"Our net penning program is very different than Michigan's," Wisconsin DNR fisheries biologist Brad Eggold said. "It's very short term. In most cases the fish are only in the pens for a day or a day and a half. We don't do any feeding. Basically it just allows the fish to get acclimated and allows them to be stocked at night." Stocking at night allows salmon smolts stocked in the Milwaukee Harbor to have a fighting chance of running the gauntlet of walleyes and other predators that invade the harbor when the salmon get planted.

"Natural reproduction is virtually nil in most of our streams due to stream flows, water temperatures and turbidity," said Eggold.

That's makes the case even stronger for net pens. —M.G.

is one and a half times better at the very least and sometimes three or four times better." That means fishery managers with net pens can release up to 50 percent fewer fish and anticipate the same returns, says Dexter.

Net pens, however, are labor intensive. Without manpower from sportsman's groups, charter boat associations and conservation organizations there would be no net penning programs. Fisheries divisions don't have the muscle or funds. Dexter noted that net pens allow sportsmen to feel like they are in control of their own fishing destiny to some extent if they can see the growth of the fish and see more fish caught in their local waters.

Bill Lowrie has headed up the Ludington Area Charter Boat Association's net penning program from its inception more than a decade ago. The LACA net penning program has contributed countless thousands of chinooks to the waters of Lake Michigan off Ludington, Michigan.

The salmon usually arrive at the Ludington net pens in May, but the work begins long before that. The net pens go into storage where the nets dry each year. The nets need to be replaced every few years, which takes several hours of volunteer work. When fish arrival is imminent the nets go in the Sable River at Ludington State Park several days in advance. Consumers Energy is a partner in the program, constructing the pens' aluminum frames and providing a boom truck to place the pens in the current and remove them several weeks later.

When the fish arrive, the volunteers are ready with a long pipe run from the hatchery truck to the individual pens; each pen gets a prescribed number of salmon and a dose of food. Automatic feeders have replaced hand feeding and the salmon thrive. After years of hard work and many trials and tribulations, the LACA net penning program is considered to be state-of-the-art and the great



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OUR CHANGING GREAT LAKES FISHERY

By Legendary Angler Don Dubin

Everything in our world is changing, including our Great Lakes fishing. During the nineteen seventies and eighties it did not take a great deal of knowledge or skill to come in with a boat load of fish. During that period the Great Lakes were much more fertile. They were able to support a massive forage base of alewives. The salmon and trout fishing flourished.

With the elimination of phosphates, and the advent of strong EPA rulings on discharging waste materials, the Great Lakes became cleaner. Today, we have over one hundred and fifty exotic species that have been introduced to the Great Lakes. They have come by way of the discharging of the ballast water of international ocean freighters. The zebra and quagga mussels have changed the entire aquatic ecosystem. These mussels are filtering out the phytoplankton and zooplankton, which young fish need to survive. The massive alewife population is collapsing. The size of the salmon and trout are not as big as in the past.

The Great Lakes are constantly being attacked by negative publicity, including the warning of humans not to eat Great Lakes fish. Many people have stopped fishing or have switched to inland waters for their fishing. Even with all this doom and gloom, the Great Lakes still offers the opportunity for some of the best salmon and trout fishing in the world. The key to getting more out of this resource is to be more versatile. You can change your methods or even try fishing for other species. Instead of traditional trolling methods, try casting, jigging or drifting with either cut or live bait. The boat harbors are loaded with trophy steelheads and brown trout that can be caught by casting lures, spoons, spinners or small tube jigs. Let's not forget the jumbo perch that are also being caught from the piers all around the Great Lakes. In addition, most of the rivers support large runs of both salmon and trout during their spawning season.



Don is pictured with a 17-lb. steelhead taken on a fly rod.

So what will the future be like now that these changes are taking place? As more exotics enter the Great Lakes, only fish species that can adapt will survive. The various Departments of Natural Resources of each state will have to stock fish that will thrive in this new environment. Our shoreline is also changing with more rock structure, as new harbors and piers are built. The zebra mussels have made the water so clear that now we have more light penetration. This has allowed the development of weed beds in our harbors.

As the environment changes, you can never tell what kind of fish you may catch. In addition to trout and salmon, the lakes are building up strong populations of warm water species. Bluegills, crappies, largemouth and smallmouth bass can be caught all along the various lakefronts. We even have trophy walleyes, northern pike and monster muskies in many areas of the Great Lakes. The lakes are changing that is for sure. With good management, our Great Lakes should continue to offer great fishing in the future.

In conclusion

No one can really predict the future of the Illinois, Lake Michigan, or the Great Lakes fisheries, and the concerns and solutions are my opinions, and I welcome any discussion on these topics.

This book was compiled from my collections of pictures, and historic documents from previous years. I hope to add any further information as it becomes available.

I have been a lifelong member of Salmon Unlimited and served as the Educational Director for over 25 years. For my efforts, I was honored to be inducted in both the Illinois Conservation Hall of Fame, and the National Freshwater Hall of Fame, as a Legendary Angler.

I have been very fortunate to have been involved with so many great people who helped make Lake Michigan the fishing capital of the Midwest.

In conclusion, I hope "we never forget" the history of our Lake Michigan and Great Lakes fisheries.

DON DUBIN