

LEC Announcement of 2022 sport fishing effort corrections and model updates

After the 2022 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) setting process was finalized by the Lake Erie Committee (LEC), biologists discovered a mistake in the Ohio sport fishery effort data provided to the Walleye and Yellow Perch task groups. These data are used in the statistical catch-at-age models to estimate the adult population abundance and ultimately generate a Recommended Allowable Harvest (RAH) for consideration by the LEC. The statistical catch-at-age models were run again using the updated effort data to generate new estimates of population abundance and RAH.

Ultimately, the LEC chose not to change any of the announced 2022 TAC values. For yellow perch, TAC decisions would not have changed, as the deviations in angler effort were minimal in Management Units 1 and 3, with no difference in Management Unit 2. For walleye, the updated RAH was 2% lower than the RAH that was provided during the TAC setting process. Considering the predicted abundance of over 70 million adult walleye for the 2022 fishing season, along with a record high trawl survey recruitment index for the 2021 year class that will be joining the fishery in 2023, the LEC chose not to decrease the announced walleye TAC of 14.533 million fish.

The LEC truly appreciates the diligence and integrity of the technical staff and their communication through the task groups. With thorough assessment of the impacts and good communication, the LEC was provided with the information necessary to arrive at the decision to stay with the TACs that were previously announced. Addenda will be added to the 2022 Walleye and Yellow Perch task group reports for a more thorough description of the effort changes and the resulting minor population abundance changes.