



Lake Erie Committee

REPRESENTING THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES OF LAKE ERIE

2200 Commonwealth Blvd.
Suite 100
Ann Arbor MI 48105-1563
Tel: 734-662-3209

MICHIGAN DNR

NEW YORK DEC

OHIO DNR

ONTARIO MNRF

PENNSYLVANIA F&BC

For Immediate Release
March 25, 2022

Contacts:
Canada: Rich Drouin: 519-488-9871
USA: Marc Gaden: 734-669-3012

Lake Erie Committee Sets Yellow Perch and Walleye Allowable Catches for 2022

Ann Arbor, MI— Lake Erie fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania—meeting as the binational Lake Erie Committee (LEC)—agreed to a total allowable catch (TAC) for 2022 of 14.533 million walleye and 7.185 million pounds of yellow perch. Walleye are allocated by number of fish and yellow perch are allocated in pounds. These TACs represent an increase in walleye from 12.284 million fish last year and an increase for yellow perch from 6.238 million pounds of fish. Specific allocations of both species are presented below by jurisdiction.

The LEC makes TAC decisions by consensus of the members. The LEC's TAC recommendations are produced after extensive, lakewide biological assessments, analyses, discussions, and consultations with stakeholders. The recommendations are consistent with the status of Lake Erie's fish populations, taking into the account the goal of stable harvest. The individual state and provincial governments implement the TACs in their jurisdiction in accordance with their respective regulations and management objectives.

WALLEYE: Guided by the Walleye Management Plan, which was developed in consultation with the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group (LEPMAG), the LEC set a 2022 lakewide walleye TAC of 14.533 million fish, an 18% increase over the 2021 TAC of 12.284 million fish. The increased TAC reflects continued strong recruitment and high population levels over the last several years. The Province of Ontario and the states of Ohio and Michigan share the TAC based on a formula of walleye habitat within each jurisdiction in the western and central basins of the lake. Under the 2022 TAC, Ohio will be entitled to 7.428 million fish, Ontario 6.258 million fish, and Michigan 0.847 million fish. Jurisdictions in eastern Lake Erie are outside of the TAC area, but harvest limits are set consistent with lakewide objectives.

YELLOW PERCH: The yellow perch fishery is divided into four management units (MU), which generally correspond to the western, west-central, east-central, and eastern basins of Lake Erie. The LEC has strived to maintain sustainable harvest while responding to changing abundance. The proposed TAC represents differences among the management units in abundance and biomass.

Guided by the Yellow Perch Management Plan (YPMP), the LEC has finalized TAC decisions for each management unit as follows: The TAC in MU 1 will increase to 3.038 million pounds. The TAC in MU 2 will decrease to 0.537 million pounds. The TAC in MU 3 will increase to 3.082 million pounds. The TAC in MU 4 will increase to 0.528 million pounds.

In making these recommendations, the LEC relied on the YPMP, which was also developed in consultation with the LEPMAG, and provided the technical foundation for the LEC's decisions. The plan established harvest policies aimed at maintaining population and fishery sustainability for each MU using a stakeholder driven process. Each harvest policy was extensively evaluated using simulation modeling with data inputs from fishery-dependent and fishery-independent sources. The YPMP was designed to ensure fishery sustainability and quality to satisfy conservation and maintain socio-economic benefits.

The LEC acknowledges the significance of the cut in the MU 2 TAC in 2021. Ongoing declines in abundance have indicated that an additional cut in 2022 was required. Poor recruitment in 7 of the past 9 years has reduced the population and triggered harvest policy actions leading to a reduction in the fishing rate and low TAC. Reducing harvest in accordance with the LEC's YPMP helps ensure sustainable spawning stock levels that will allow the best opportunity for recovery. The LEC also acknowledges stakeholder concerns surrounding the mixed signals of recruitment and relatively poor fisheries performance in MU 3 in recent years. However, adult biomass in MU 3 remains above the threshold for sustainability and increased slightly in 2022, resulting in an increase in TAC in accordance the YPMP harvest policy.

The following table reflects the distribution of the 2022 yellow perch TAC within each management unit for each agency. Units are expressed in millions of pounds.

Management Unit	Agency	2022 TAC
1	Ontario	1.233
	Michigan	0.276
	Ohio	1.528
	Total	3.038
2	Ontario	0.245
	Ohio	0.292
	Total	0.537
3	Ontario	1.612
	Ohio	0.999
	Pennsylvania	0.472
	Total	3.082
4	Ontario	0.306
	Pennsylvania	0.058
	New York	0.164
	Total	0.528
	Lakewide	7.185

THE LAKE ERIE PERCID MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP (LEPMAG): The LEPMAG was first convened in 2010 and serves as the primary method to incorporate stakeholder needs and objectives into the Lake Erie yellow perch and walleye decision-making process. The LEPMAG consists of senior agency representatives from all provincial and state jurisdictions on the lake, recreational fishers, commercial fishers, and other interested organizations. Through the LEPMAG, fishery managers and stakeholders work together to identify the harvest policies for Lake Erie percid that meet the needs of all stakeholders while maintaining stability in the percid fishery. Michigan State University's Quantitative Fisheries Center facilitates the LEPMAG process. Both walleye and yellow perch are managed through management plans, which were adopted by the Lake Erie Committee in 2015 and 2020, respectively. The LEPMAG played a major role providing advice to the LEC about the plans.

THE LAKE ERIE COMMITTEE (LEC) AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC): The Lake Erie Committee comprises fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania. The committee's work is facilitated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a Canadian and U.S. treaty-based agency on the Great Lakes. The TAC represents what the committee considers to be a sustainable level of harvest, as guided by recommendations from the Yellow Perch and Walleye Task groups. The individual agencies allocate the TAC through setting commercial fishing quotas and recreational fishing daily limits intended to maintain annual harvest levels within the TAC.

--END--