



MICHIGAN STEELHEADERS THUMB CHAPTER

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President's Message

April, 2012

AT THE HELM BY PRESIDENT LEPEAK.

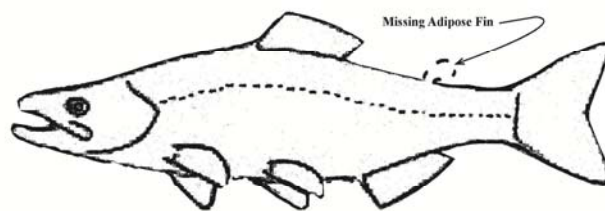
A warm winter greeting from Michigan to all my fellow Steelheaders wherever you may be. What happened to winter this year? I stay north this year to enjoy winter and it is no where to be seen! Well may-be next year I can go ice fishing. It has been a busy winter so far this year as the new President of the Thumb Chapter of the Michigan Steelheaders. A major project under way as we speak is the writing of a new set of by-laws for our chapter. Past Prez Noble, Treasurer Allen, Director Schwab along with Secretary Lawrence and myself have worked to get a preliminary draft together to present to the full Board of Directors. When the entire Board of Directors meet and come up with a final version of by-laws, the package will be presented to the membership at one of our monthly meetings for your final approval before it becomes effective. You the membership will be kept informed as this process moves along.

This winter's meetings started out in November with a trip to the Flint River Valley Steelheaders monthly meeting with our Club State Rep. Dr. Ken Merckel. On the way down, Ken informs me that I will be giving a presentation on our ongoing net pen project as the keynote speaker, after which he will give his report on Lake Huron issues. I guess 30 minutes advance warning is good enough to get something together. Thanks Ken! The night went off real smooth and a few days later Flint called and let us know they are going to donate 1000.00 dollars to help with the net pens! I would like to thank President Greg Gumbrecht and his entire club for this BIG donation. I also want to thank the other Steelheader Clubs who have donated to this project the past few years. This reaffirms my belief that Steelheaders don't just talk about stuff to work on, we get stuff done! Next up was a trip to Higgins Lake to the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee meeting at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center. A very good presentation was given by Eric Mac Millan on the subject of Quantifying the bycatch of Saginaw Bay's commercial trap net fishery. I was amazed at the number of Walleye destroyed by trap netters. Ken Merckel will give more details of this travesty at our monthly meetings. Also discussed was the Brown Trout Fishery at Harbor Beach and the way the creel census numbers seem to be insisting there is not enough fish or interest to continue this program. It looks like, if you want to catch Brown Trout you better get with it the next couple years because this Brown Fishery we have now is on the way of the dinosaurs. In January Ken and I traveled to Lansing for the yearly Michigan Steelheaders Presidents meeting. Many items were on the agenda in this meeting including a lengthy discussion to adopt the new Logo for the Steelheaders organization. A vote was taken and this measure passed by a small margin. Each club can phase in this new logo at their discretion. It will be a while before this chapter switches. The highlight of this meeting for me was meeting, talking to and shaking the hand of Dr. Howard Tanner. Dr Tanner is one of my Michigan heroes right up there with Fred Bear and Mort Neff. After I thanked him for the hundreds of hours of recreation he gave my family and I along with thousands of other Michiganders by putting Salmon in the Great Lakes, he told me I hear this alot but I never get tired of hearing thank you.

The coming year will see a return of some of our favorite activities in the Club with the Pig Roast, Club Picnic, Lady's Night along with two

fishing tournaments in May. New for this year will be some speakers of celebrity status and we are in the middle of getting a Wounded Warrior Fishing program together. Member Kevin Ramsey has been working hard on this throughout the winter along with Dr. Merckel to get this up and running. Also new for this year will be a Walleye tournament for club members with a group out of the Pigeon area. One thing I plan to spend a lot of time and effort on this year is getting all the new members we can into the Thumb Steelheaders. This can not be done by one person alone as it will take the efforts of all the membership to keep us alive and growing. Our next monthly meeting will be April 19th at 7:30 pm, bring a friend, a neighbor or even the in-laws and introduce them to some good ol' family fun and fish stories!

Fish with coded wire tags in the noses are marked with a missing adipose fin



Please return heads from marked fish to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

It is critical that all fishermen return tagged fish. See instructions at all cleaning stations.

Upcoming Events

April 19	Regular Meeting @7:30
April 28	Fish Fry—Ugly Fox Hunters Club. Bring a dish to pass. Eat at 6:30
May 5	Can2Can Tournament
May 17	Regular Meeting @7:30
May 19	Offshore Challenge Tournament

Flint Steelheaders donate \$1000 towards net pen project.

President Steve Lepeak and Thumb Steelheaders State Representative Ken Merckel traveled to the Flint River Valley Steelheaders meeting on January 18 to receive a check for \$1000 for the net pens project. Steve spoke for a few minutes on how great it is that Steelheaders work together to make fishing better in this area for everyone and thanked Flint Steelheaders President Greg Gumbrecht and his membership for their support. Ken then gave a more detailed talk about the net pens. It was a fun night as guest of the Flint River Valley Steelheaders.



Flint Steelheaders President Greg Gumbrecht presents Thumb chapter president Steve Lepeak with \$1000 check.



Ken Merckel attended the Flint Steelheaders meeting with Steve and made a nice presentation about our Net Pen projects.

Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee meeting update.

Jerry Lawrence, Ken Merckel, Jack Noble and Bud Donnelly attended the Advisory meeting in October. The following are highlights of that meeting:

Steelhead update

This is the first year for stocking marked steelhead in net pens at Harbor Beach, Oscoda and Harrisville. A comparison is being made to determine if steelhead stocked after becoming acclimated in net pens survive better than steelhead stocked directly into Lake Huron. **This study will continue in 2012 and 2013 and it is crucial that captured marked fish are turned in!** These fish have an adipose fin clip and a coded wire tag in their nose. Three Lake Huron tributaries including the East Branch of the Au Gres River, Riffle River, and Ocqueoc River each received a plant of 100,000 fall fingerling steelhead. These fish were not marked and measured 2-3 inches in length. Survival is anticipated to be low, but fishing opportunities should result.

Brown Trout update

2011 began the third and final stocking year of the fall yearling brown trout project. We are now entering the review phase of the study. Jim Baker's crew surveyed the harbor at Harbor Beach on September 27 shocking and capturing 14 brown trout that appeared to be from the 2009 plant. These preliminary results indicate we are potentially starting to see some return on these fish but so far it appears that the fish are not returning in big numbers. The goal is to have a return of at least 5% and to determine more accurately how the study is progressing we will revisit this topic at the January 11, 2012 Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Meeting. The discussion will include the creel and charter boat data from the 2011 harvest.

Cisco Update

The handout provides a summary of the results of the cisco pilot project over the last 4 years. This pilot project involved a tremendous amount of effort. Cisco are not easy to rear, requiring specific temperatures that we haven't figured out yet. Other items that need to be addressed before full production can begin include determining optimum rearing densities, need to improve live capture techniques since eggs need to be taken from living fish, inadequate amount of personnel and financial resources and obtaining enough eggs without negatively impacting the broodstock. The source of eggs for the project has been the St Mary's River. The amount of eggs and the window for obtaining them in the River is limited so other source populations will be explored including Georgian Bay/North Channel, Drummond Island and Lake Superior-Apostle Island. The options will be reviewed and an update will be provided to the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee in 2012. The egg take and rearing will not be conducted this fall and winter.

Dr. Ken Merckel selected to lead Michigan Steelheaders. Jack Noble to assume role as Chapter state representative.

Press Release Thursday March 29, 2012

HOLLAND, MICH – The board of directors of the Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen’s Association reluctantly accepted the resignation of its president, Rick Balabon, at its meeting in Lansing on March 7th. Rick is stepping down after eight years of leadership to devote more time to his expanded role at work and responsibilities at home. Vice president, Dr. Kenneth E. Merckel D.D.S., of Mayville, MI was elevated to president for the remainder of Balabon’s term, through December 2012.

Dr. Merckel graduated from the University of Detroit with a BS (60) and D.D.S. (65). He began his career as a clinical and research bacteriologist at Henry Ford Hospital from 1960 until 1965. From 1965, through the present day, he has practiced general dentistry in Mayville, MI. He is married to Lenore and together they raised three children and now have two granddaughters. He has fished and hunted all of his life and joined the Thumb Chapter of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen’s Association in 1985.

Dr. Merckel served the Thumb Chapter as vice president for six years and president for two years. He has served as the chapter’s state director to MSSFA since 1991. During his tenure on MSSFA’s board he has fostered collaborative relationships with the MDNR, Michigan Sea Grant, Great Lakes Science Center and United States Fish & Wildlife Service. He has successfully worked through MSSFA to secure funding for the MDNR hatchery renovation, increased the rod limit to three per person and five salmon per person limit on the Great Lakes and

continues to improve the fishery through his work as a member of the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee of the MDNR.

Dr. Merckel takes the helm of MSSFA at a challenging time for the MDNR and our Great Lakes fisheries. His grassroots approach to getting members more actively involved in facing these challenges will be one of his leadership priorities as president of MSSFA.

At the Thumb Chapter board of directors meeting on March 15th. The board approved the selection of Jack Noble to replace Ken as the Thumb chapter state representative.



Fishing Pro **Mark Martin** presented at our March meeting. He focused on fishing techniques for walleye on large body lakes. Here are a few tips from his presentation:

- Use #13 floating Rapala at .8 to 1 mph. Slow is key in sprint. If you feel the lure wobble you’re too fast.
- Super glue your knot at the lure with the knot pointed up slightly to ensure optimum action.
- Use prism tape on side of body.
- Use mono line because stretch will allow fish to suck in lure.
- When waves are high, use clip on weights about halfway back to minimize surge.
- Troll with the wind whenever possible
- Gulp crawlers are effective.
- 30’ of lead core will be 5’ down, 60’ will be 10’ down.
- Whenever you feel the slightest change in action, set the hook!

Please take a look at your address block on the back of this newsletter. Just above your name is the date that your membership will expire. If your dues are coming up in the next quarter, please reduce our mailing cost by filling out the form below and sending it along with a check for \$30 to our membership chairman at:

Tom Smith
1580 Deckerville Rd.
Snover, MI 48472-9754

DATE _____ NEW MEMBER RENEWAL SENIOR: YES NO
PLEASE PRINT FIRMLY
 CHECK CASH VISA / MC # _____ EXP. DATE _____
NAME _____ PHONE _____
AREA CODE (_____) _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP _____ No. in Household _____
BOAT NAME _____
HOME PORT OR STREAM _____ TYPE OF FISHING: Stream Lake Both
SPONSORED BY _____ PHONE _____
AREA CODE (_____) _____

MSSFA STATE AND CHAPTER DUES		
<input type="checkbox"/> AUSABLE RIVER (OSCODA) \$32.00	<input type="checkbox"/> HOLLAND \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> SOUTH HAVEN \$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> BATTLE CREEK \$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/> HURON VALLEY \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> S. W. MICHIGAN (ST. JOSEPH) \$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> BENZIE AREA \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> MANISTEE \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> THUMB AREA \$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> CENTRAL MICHIGAN \$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> METRO-WEST \$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/> THUNDER BAY \$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> FLINT RIVER VALLEY \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> MIDLAND / SAGINAW \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> WHITE RIVER \$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> GRAND HAVEN \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> MID-MICHIGAN \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> AT-LARGE MEMBERSHIP \$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> GRAND RAPIDS \$30.00		<input type="checkbox"/> JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP \$5.00

WHITE - STATE COPY CANARY - RECEIPT TAG - CHAPTER



Take a Kid Fishing!



April, 2012

Michigan Steelheaders
 Thumb Chapter
 2970 N. Lakeshore Rd
 Port Hope, MI 48468

Temp-Return Service Requested

	OFFICERS		<div style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 10px;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Check Out Our New Website!</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Visit www.thumb.michigansteelheaders.org Sign up for email delivery of this newsletter!</p> </div>
Steve Lepeak (2012)	President	(989)785-9100	
Grant Sadler (2012)	Vice President	(989)635-2742	
Jerry Lawrence (2021)	Secretary	(989)428-4937	
Phillip Allen (2012)	Treasurer	(989)479-3259	
	BOARD OF DIRECTORS		<div style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 10px;"> <p>Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Ugly Fox Hunters Club on M-19, two miles south of M- 142. Board of Directors meet @ 6:30 PM and Regular meeting comes to order @ 7:30</p> </div>
Douglass Vatter	(2012)	(989)761-7556	
Tom Smith	(2012)	(810)672-9932	
Steve Schwab	(2012)	(989)479-0774	
Jack Noble	(2012)	(989)479-0445	
Brandon Standon	(2012)	(989)963-0215	
	REPRESENTATIVE & CHAIRMEN		
Jack Noble	State Representative	(2012)	(989)479-0445
Tom Smith	Membership Chairman	(2012)	(810)672-9932
Grant Sadler	Pig Roast Chairman	(2012)	(989)635-2742
Doug Vatter	Pig Roast Co-Chairman	(2012)	(989)761-7556
Jerry Lawrence	Net Pen Chairman	(2012)	(989)428-4937
OPEN	50/50 Raffle Chairman	(2012)	
OPEN	Meeting Raffle Chairman	(2012)	
Tom Smith	Meeting Refreshments Chairman	(2012)	(810)672-9932
Jerry Lawrence	Newsletter Chairman	(2012)	(989)428-4937
Jerry Lawrence	Kids Fishing Day Co-Chairman	(2012)	(989)479-6365
Art Farden	Kids Fishing Day Chairman	(2012)	(989)479-0777