

OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



Lake Erie Walleye & Yellow Perch Management Process

Management Framework

Harvest of Lake Erie Walleye and Yellow Perch is annually allocated among jurisdictions (MI, OH, PA, NY, ON) through a quota-management framework facilitated by the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC).



This science-based approach began in 1976 for Walleye and 1984 for Yellow Perch. It is a collaborative, consensus-based process involving each fisheries agency as signatories of *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries*, rather than mandated by law.

One representative from each agency serves on the Lake Erie Committee (LEC) of the GLFC for annual deliberations. Individual jurisdictions maintain sole management authority within their waters to further allocate harvest among sport and commercial fisheries and regulate fisheries.



Annual Process

- Agencies collect fisheries data within their jurisdictions.
- Data are analyzed by biologists serving on Walleye and Yellow Perch task groups and population models are developed to estimate past population sizes and predict upcoming populations.
- Model predictions allow the LEC to set Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the upcoming fishing season.
- TAC results are announced in late March at the annual LEC meeting.



Quota Allocations and Monitoring

- Jurisdictions receive area-based portions of the TAC as quota.
- Sport fisheries are conservatively regulated through daily harvest and minimum size limits to remain under quota and are monitored with creel surveys.
- Commercial fisheries are regulated and monitored with real-time catch reporting to remain within quota allocations for each license.



Public Process and Stakeholder Input

The LEC receives formal public input through the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group (LEPMAG), a structured decision-making process facilitated by Michigan State University. LEPMAG was formed to build and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholder groups and to improve process transparency.

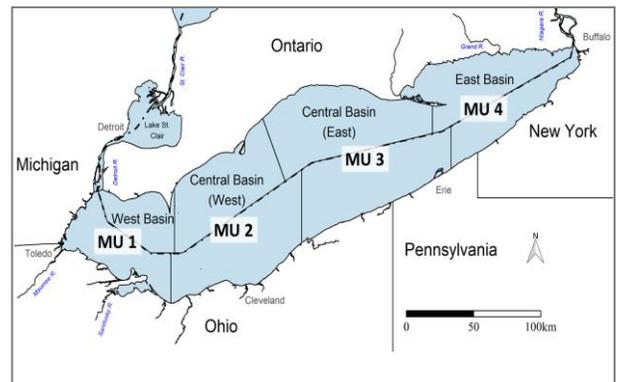


Walleye Management

- Walleye are managed as one lake wide population, as their seasonal migrations utilize the entire lake. One population model is run, and one TAC is annually set.
- A regression analysis of August west basin trawl surveys in Ohio and Ontario is the sole predictor of 2-year-old fish that will recruit to the fishery. For example, the 2020 young-of-year Walleye trawl index (catch per hectare) from the August Ohio-Ontario interagency trawl survey will be used to predict the number of 2-year-old Walleye in 2022.
- Walleye TAC is issued in numbers of fish and is divided by Michigan, Ohio and Ontario based on the proportion of Walleye “habitat” in each jurisdiction. While Pennsylvania and New York harvest are accounted for, they are considered “non-quota” area.

Yellow Perch Management

- Yellow Perch are managed regionally through four management units (MUs, see map) as tagging studies have found that Yellow Perch migrate much less than Walleye. Each year four models are run and four TACs are set. Ohio has management jurisdiction in three of the four MUs.
- A modelling process is used to predict 2-year-old recruitment within each of the four MUs. Both young-of-year and yearling catches from numerous surveys are utilized to predict how many 2-year-old fish are entering each MU’s population each year.
- Yellow Perch TAC is issued in pounds and is based on surface area of each jurisdiction within each MU.



Sustainable, Science-Based, Collaborative Management

- Lake-wide collaborative science-based management as facilitated by the GLFC is the most responsible process to ensure sustainable populations of high value quota species.
- While most species-specific management plans are built around specific timeframes (five-year cycles for Walleye and Yellow Perch), models and TAC setting processes are continually assessed to ensure responsible harvest management of Lake Erie’s fish stocks.
- Long term survey datasets continue to be the backbone of interagency collaborative management, and significant effort and resources are annually allocated to maintaining these important datasets that are utilized for the modelling and TAC setting process.

Additional Resources Available Online

- Annual task group reports, LEC species-specific management plans, and guiding documents such as the JSP can all be found on various pages of the GLFC web site at www.GLFC.org.
- Annual reports from each agency detailing their Lake Erie survey results can be found on each agency’s web page or by contacting Lake Erie staff from each agency.