



Lake Erie Committee

REPRESENTING THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES OF LAKE ERIE

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Lake Erie Committee Sets Yellow Perch and Walleye Total Allowable Catches for 2020

ANN ARBOR, MI—The binational Lake Erie Committee (LEC), composed of fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania—the five jurisdictions that manage the Lake Erie fishery—set total allowable catches (TACs) for 2020 of 7.805 million pounds of yellow perch and 10.237 million walleye. Yellow perch are allocated in pounds and walleye are allocated by number of fish. These TACs represent a decrease for yellow perch from 8.552 million pounds of fish last year and an increase in walleye from 8.531 million fish. Specific allocations of both species are presented below by jurisdiction.

TAC decisions are made by consensus of the LEC. These decisions are reflective of the status of Lake Erie's fish populations and consider the goal of sustainable harvest each year. The allocations are determined by the LEC after extensive, lakewide biological assessments, analyses, discussions, and consultations with stakeholders. The individual state and provincial governments implement the TAC in their jurisdiction in accordance with their respective regulations and management objectives.

WALLEYE: Guided by the Walleye Management Plan, the LEC set a 2020 lakewide walleye TAC of 10.237 million fish, a 20% increase over the 2019 TAC of 8.531 million fish. The increased TAC reflects strong recruitment during the previous few years and expected increases in population size. 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 a 2020 TAC of 10.237 million fish, Ohio will be entitled to 5.232 million fish, Ontario 4.408 million fish, and Michigan 0.597 million fish. Jurisdictions in eastern Lake Erie are outside of the TAC area, but harvest limits are set consistent with lakewide objectives.

YELLOW PERCH: Yellow perch TAC decisions are the result of deliberations among scientists, managers, and stakeholders through the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, known as "LEPMAG." Based on science and those extensive LEPMAG discussions, the LEC set a 2020 combined TAC of 7.805 million pounds of yellow perch.

The yellow perch fishery is divided into four management units, which generally correspond to the eastern, east-central, west-central and western basins of Lake Erie. The LEC has strived to maintain sustainable harvest while responding to changing population trajectories. The LEC acknowledges that there has been poor recruitment of yellow perch in the central basin and expects that the TAC could continue to decline there.

The five jurisdictions on the lake share Lake Erie's yellow perch under an area-based formula. Pursuant to the 2020 TAC, Ontario will receive 3.737 million pounds, Ohio 3.139 million pounds, Michigan 0.192 million pounds, New York 0.203 million pounds, and Pennsylvania 0.534 million pounds. As with walleye, each Lake Erie jurisdiction is responsible for allocating its portion of the TAC.

THE LAKE ERIE PERCID MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP (LEPMAG): Since 2010, the LEPMAG has served as the primary method to incorporate stakeholder needs and objectives into the decision-making process regarding harvest of walleye and yellow perch. The LEPMAG consists of senior 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 fishery 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. Walleye are now being managed under the Walleye Management Plan, which was developed through the LEPMAG and formally adopted by the LEC in December, 2015. The LEPMAG is also advising the LEC as it seeks to finalize a yellow perch management plan in 2020.

THE LAKE ERIE COMMITTEE (LEC) AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCHES (TACs): The LEC’s work is facilitated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a Canada and U.S. agency on the Great Lakes. Each year the committee reaches consensus TAC decisions for walleye and yellow perch. The TAC represents what the committee considers as 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.

The table below reflects the distribution of the 2020 yellow perch TAC within each management unit for each agency. Units are expressed in millions of pounds.

Management Unit	Agency	2020 TAC
1	Ontario	0.857
	Michigan	0.192
	Ohio	1.061
	Total	2.110
2	Ontario	0.922
	Ohio	1.099
	Total	2.021
3	Ontario	1.579
	Ohio	0.978
	Pennsylvania	0.462
	Total	3.020
4	Ontario	0.379
	Pennsylvania	0.072
	New York	0.203
	Total	0.654
	Lakewide	7.805