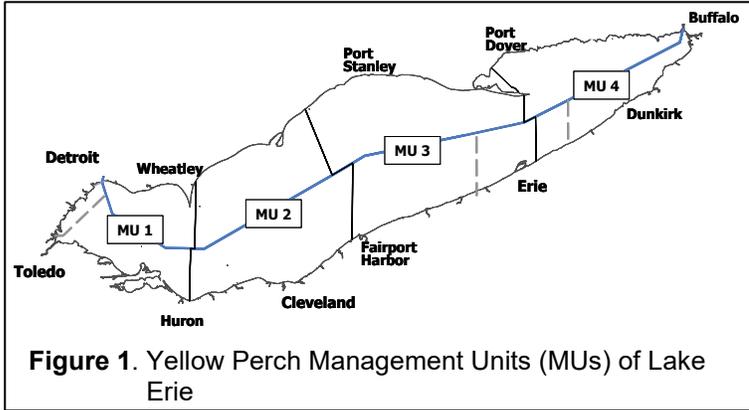


# YELLOW PERCH TASK GROUP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT MARCH 2026



## 2025 Fisheries Review

The lakewide total allowable catch (TAC) of Yellow Perch in 2025 was 5.866 million pounds. This allocation represented a 10% decrease from a TAC of 6.554 million pounds in 2024. For Yellow Perch assessment and allocation, Lake Erie is partitioned into four management units (MUs; Figure 1). The 2025 TAC allocation was 2.289, 0.972, 2.123, and 0.482 million pounds for MUs 1 through 4, respectively. The lakewide harvest of Yellow Perch in 2025 was 3.158 million pounds, or 54% of the total 2025 TAC, which was a 10% decrease from the 2024 harvest of 3.500 million pounds. Harvest from MUs 1 through 4 was 1.449, 0.538, 0.862, and 0.309 million pounds, respectively (Table 1). The portion of TAC harvested was 63%, 55%, 41%, and 64%, in MUs 1 through 4, respectively. In 2025, Ontario harvested 2.202 million pounds, followed by Ohio (0.810 million lbs.), New York (0.050 million lbs.), Pennsylvania (0.049 million lbs.), and Michigan (0.047 million lbs.).



In 2025, targeted (i.e., small mesh) commercial gill net effort in Canadian waters increased from 2024 by 21%, 109%, 22%, and 8% in MU1 to MU4 respectively. Sport angling effort in U.S. waters during 2025 was highest in MU1 and lowest in MU3. Angler effort in 2025 decreased 13%, 61%, and 65% in MU1, MU2 and MU3 respectively and increased by 12% in MU4 compared to 2024. Angler effort remains low in MU2 and MU3. Fishing effort by jurisdiction and gear type is presented in Table 2.

Ontario targeted commercial gill net harvest rates in 2025 decreased by 39%, 30%, 7%, and 5% relative to 2024 rates in MU1 to MU4, respectively. 2025 targeted angling harvest rates (fish harvested per angler hour) declined in MU1, MU2 and MU3 compared to 2024. Harvest per angler hour decreased in both Michigan (-28%) and Ohio (-29%) waters of MU1. In the central basin, the sport angler harvest rate decreased in the Ohio waters of MU2 (-55%). In MU3, the sport harvest rate in Ohio and Pennsylvania waters decreased to 0.0 fish per angler hour and was the lowest catch rate in the time series. In MU4, harvest rates decreased slightly in New York waters (-5%) while increasing 153% in Pennsylvania waters. In 2025, trap net harvest rates in U.S. waters decreased by 40% in MU1, 4% in MU3, and 5% in MU4, and increased 70% in MU2 compared to 2024.

Table 1. Lake Erie Yellow Perch harvest by jurisdiction (pounds) and gear type for 2025.

MU	Harvest by jurisdiction (lbs)								Total (lbs)
	Michigan	Ontario	Ohio		Pennsylvania		New York		
	sport	all commercial*	sport	commercial trap net	sport	commercial trap net	sport	commercial trap net	
1	46,980	896,850	245,165	260,494					1,449,489
2		394,870	11,125	132,177					538,172
3		655,702	2,705	158,724	1,674	42,896			861,701
4		254,093			4,531	0	39,019	11,063	308,706
<b>Total</b>	46,980	2,201,515	258,995	551,395	6,205	42,896	39,019	11,063	3,158,068

\* small mesh, large mesh, trap net and trawl harvest combined

Table 2. Lake Erie Yellow Perch fishing effort by jurisdiction and gear type for 2025.

MU	Effort by jurisdiction							
	Michigan	Ontario	Ohio		Pennsylvania		New York	
	sport (angler hours)	commercial (km gill net)*	sport (angler hours)	commercial (trap net lifts)	sport (angler hours)	commercial (trap net lifts)	sport (angler hours)	commercial (trap net lifts)
1	82,999	7,884	423,313	5,466				
2		3,320	12,497	624				
3		4,818	2,820	1,717	1,270	209		
4		1,688			2,934	0	18,249	206
<b>Total</b>	82,999	17,710	438,630	7,807	4,204	209	18,249	206

\*small mesh effort only

## Recommended Allowable Harvest (RAH) for 2026

To implement the harvest control rule of the Yellow Perch Management Plan (YPMP), the Yellow Perch Task Group usually estimates Yellow Perch population size, limit reference points, and target fishing rates for each management unit using statistical catch-at-age and stock-recruitment models. However, in recent years these models have failed to meet convergence criteria indicating that they may have not determined the best estimate of parameters. Further, the catch-at-age models produce retrospective patterns, and the stock-recruitment models incorrectly estimated parameters used to estimate the fishing rate at the maximum sustainable yield. Due to the unreliable model results, in 2026 the Yellow Perch models were not used to implement the YPMP harvest control rule, and an alternate method to determine RAH was required.

The YPTG developed a traffic light framework that would increase or decrease RAH based on trends in assessment data. Data types used in the framework included catch rates from: commercial gill net fishery, recreational fishery, commercial trap net fishery, Ontario gill net survey, Ohio trawl survey, and New York gill net survey. The fishery and survey data were combined into one metric by standardizing the data, then averaging the standardized values. A percent rank of the average scores was calculated to determine if the score for each year was low, moderate, or high compared to the full time series (Figure 2). The percent rank score from the most recent year (2025) was compared to threshold values to guide RAH decisions. When the percent rank is below the lower threshold (25<sup>th</sup> percentile) the RAH may be reduced from the previous year, is between the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile the RAH may remain the same, or is above the upper threshold (75<sup>th</sup> percentile) the RAH may be increased from the previous year.

The percent rank of the averaged 2025 harvest and survey metrics was 17%, 11%, and 0% in MU1, MU2, and MU3 respectively, which is below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. The percent rank in MU4 was moderate at 43% and falls between the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. The YPTG recommends reducing the RAH in MU1, MU2, and MU3, and maintaining the RAH in MU4. In MU3, the percent rank value is 0%, indicating the stock status in MU3 is at its lowest level in the time series, with the recreational harvest catch rate, Ontario Partnership survey catch rate, and Ohio trawl survey catch rate all comprising the lowest values in their respective time series. Due to the very poor status of the Yellow Perch population in MU3, the YPTG recommends a larger reduction in MU3 RAH compared to MU1 and MU2.

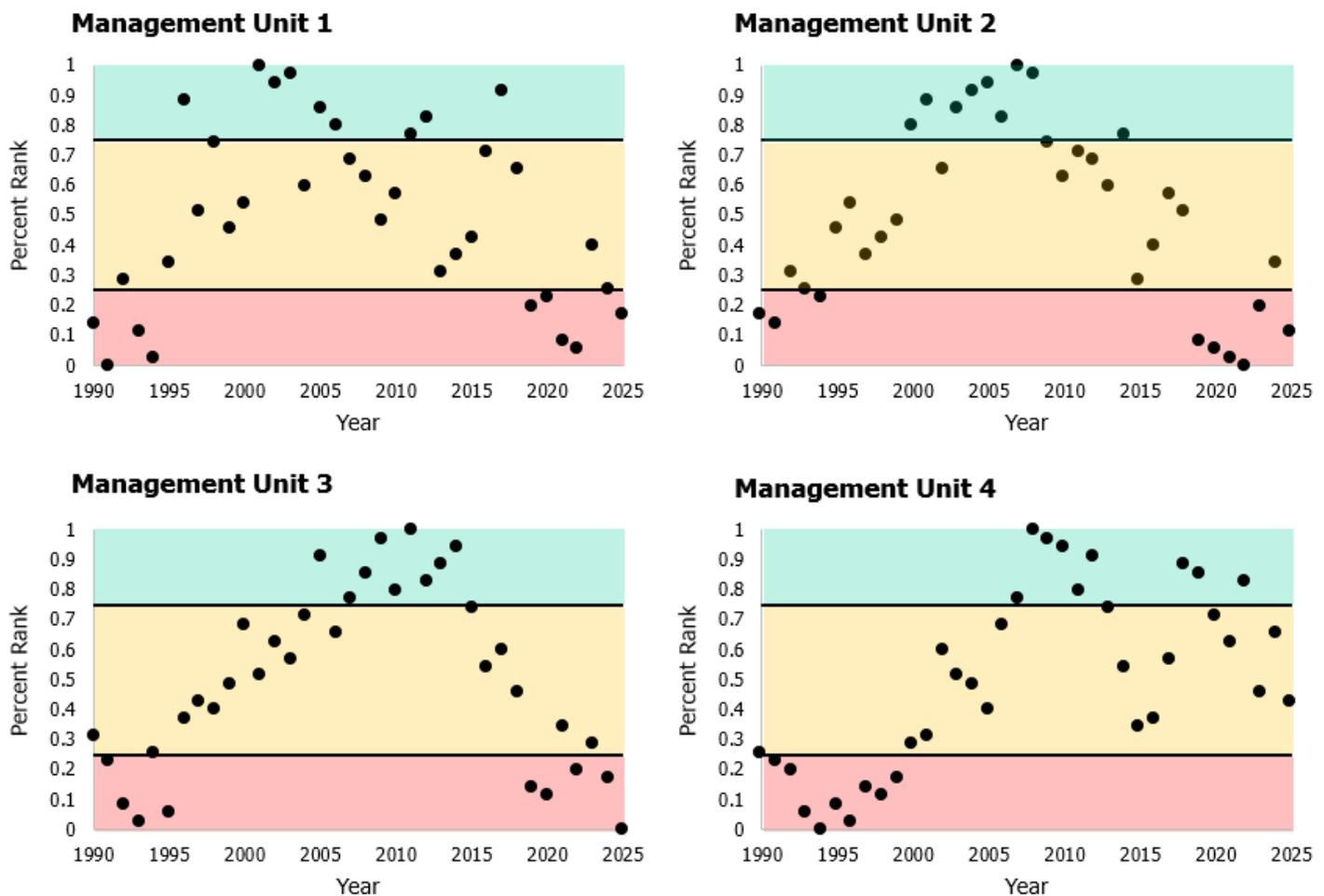


Figure 2. Percent rank values of mean standardized adult harvest and survey metrics. The upper horizontal line is the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile threshold, the lower horizontal line is the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile threshold.

The complete YPTG report is available from the GLFC's Lake Erie Committee Yellow Perch Task Group website at: <http://www.glfc.org/lake-erie-committee.php>