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GENERAL CREEL CENSUS RECORDS FOR THE CONNECTING WATERS

BETWEEN LAKE HURON AND LAKE ERIE, 1953-1955

By K. G. Fukano

This report is to bring up to date the summary of the general creel census for the connecting waters between Lake Huron and Lake Erie, namely: the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair, and St. Clair River. Institute for Fisheries Research Reports No. 1384, 1350, 1191, 997, 879, and 794 deal with earlier creel census records and other studies on these waters.

During the 3-year period of 1953-1955 the numbers of anglers contacted by Conservation Officers increased greatly over earlier years for Lake St. Clair and Detroit River. For St. Clair River there were catch records for only 1955. Generally, with the increase in fishing pressure the catch per hour dropped in these waters, except for the Detroit River in 1954. This exception was due mainly to the large number of white bass (845) caught in 1954.

Lake St. Clair. - Twenty different kinds of fish were reported in the 1953-1955 catch for Lake St. Clair (Table 1). The average catch per hour for the 3-year period was 0.93 fish as compared to 2.74 fish per hour for the preceding 5-year period. Thus there has been a definite decline in the fishing quality in catch per hour, but there has been also a change in species composition of the catch. In earlier years the

catch was composed of 3.1 percent game fish, 96.2 percent pan fish, and 0.7 percent coarse and obnoxious fishes. The 1953-1955 catch was made up of 10.8 percent game fish, 81.5 percent pan fish, and 7.7 percent coarse and obnoxious fishes.

St. Clair River. - For the St. Clair River (Table 2) it appears from the 1955 catch records that the fishing has not changed a great deal during the last 8 years. The average catch per hour for 1948-1952 ranged from 0.73 to 1.05 fish and averaged 0.83; for 1955 the average was 0.88 fish. In 1955 the walleye was the only species represented in the census records, and it was the dominant species (97.9 percent) in the earlier period.

Detroit River. - Records for the Detroit River for 1953-1955 (Table 3) are not directly comparable with the records for 1948-1952 (I. F. R. Report No. 1384), because the records for 1953-55 were collected during late spring and summer whereas the data for the earlier years represented winter fishing. This seasonal difference accounts for the greater number of species of fish in the 1953-1955 catch and may be in part the reason for the reduced number of yellow perch reported for this period. The 1953-55 catch for the Detroit River was made up of 12.6 percent game fish, 34.8 percent pan fish, and 52.6 percent coarse and obnoxious fishes.

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Table 1. General creel census summary for Lake St. Clair, 1953-1955

Type of record	Year			Total
	1953	1954	1955	
Number anglers contacted	655	2,293	3,077	6,025
Hours fished	1,388.0	6,085.5	7,481.5	14,955.0
Fish caught	2,484	5,668	5,706	13,858
Catch per hour	1.79	0.93	0.76	0.93
Officer taking records	Bruso	Bruso	Bruso	...
Catch by species				
Largemouth bass	1	5	3	9
Muskellunge	1	3	10	14
Northern pike	6	60	23	89
Smallmouth bass	85	175	218	478
Walleye	20	431	457	908
Bluegill	71	4	12	87
Crappies	57	90	83	230
Pumpkinseed	234	252	99	585
Rock bass	460	1,009	354	1,823
Yellow perch	1,368	3,235	3,970	8,573
Bullheads	...	123	6	129
Carp	...	...	1	1
Catfish	6	64	37	107
Dogfish	...	5	1	6
Freshwater drum	10	43	307	360
Mooneye	1	...	1	2
Sauger	1	2	...	3
Shad	...	27	49	76
Suckers	...	5	1	6
White bass	163	135	74	372

Table 2. General creel census summary for St. Clair River, 1953-1955

Type of record	Year			Total
	1953	1954	1955	
Number anglers contacted	...	...	152	152
Hours fished	...	...	447.0	447.0
Fish caught	...	...	392	392
Catch per hour	...	...	0.88	0.88
Officer taking records	...	...	Duncan	...
Catch by species				
Walleye	...	...	392	392

Table 3. General creel census summary for Detroit River, 1953-1955

Type of record	Year			Total
	1953	1954	1955	
Number anglers contacted	45	231	580	856
Hours fished	189.0	540.0	1,750.0	2,479.0
Fish caught	200	1,238	855	2,293
Catch per hour	1.06	2.29	0.49	0.92
Officer taking records	Guenther	Guenther, Hume	Guenther	...
Catch by species				
Largemouth bass	...	1	...	1
Northern pike	8	15	15	38
Smallmouth bass	3	1	37	41
Walleye	50	35	124	209
Crappies	...	...	9	9
Pumpkinseed	...	...	2	2
Rock bass	35	251	272	558
Yellow perch	35	63	131	229
Bullheads	...	...	2	2
Carp	...	...	2	2
Catfish	...	2	1	3
Freshwater drum	...	25	78	103
Suckers	...	...	2	2
White bass	69	845	180	1,094

Table 4. General creel census summary for the three connecting waters between Lake Huron and Lake Erie, 1953-1955

Type of record	Year			Total
	1953	1954	1955	
Number anglers contacted	700	2,524	3,809	7,033
Hours fished	1,577.0	6,625.5	9,678.5	17,881.0
Fish caught	2,684	6,906	6,953	16,543
Catch per hour	1.70	1.04	0.72	0.93
Catch by species				
Largemouth bass	1	6	3	10
Muskellunge	1	3	10	14
Northern pike	14	75	38	127
Smallmouth bass	88	176	255	519
Walleye	70	466	973	1,509
Bluegill	71	4	12	87
Crappies	57	90	92	239
Pumpkinseed	234	252	101	587
Rock bass	495	1,260	626	2,381
Yellow perch	1,403	3,298	4,101	8,802
Bullheads	...	123	8	131
Carp	...	...	3	3
Catfish	6	66	38	110
Dogfish	...	5	1	6
Freshwater drum	10	68	385	463
Mooneye	1	...	1	2
Sauger	1	2	...	3
Shad	...	27	49	76
Suckers	...	5	3	8
White bass	232	980	254	1,466