

# **NYSCC FISH COMMITTEE REPORT 2023**

The comments/concerns of the fish committee regarding the state of the New York State fishery are as follows:

1. The fish committee was opposed to the unprecedented walleye spearing incident which occurred last year at the Oneida Lake hatchery. Hopefully it was an isolated incident and will not recur this year or in the future.
2. We are now one year into the new bluegill/crappie imitative which reduced the daily bluegill/crappie take to 25 and the minimum size of crappie increased to 10". There were also special regulations for 11 lakes with daily creel reductions and size increases for bluegills. The fish committee supported this imitative but has heard some concerns that many bodies of water do not have the ability to grow 10" crappies, ex. Black Lake. S.Hurst will be giving the NYSCC a preliminary report on this program on April 1<sup>st</sup>...
3. Lamprey eel infestation continues to be a problem in Lake Ontario and its tributaries. The committee recommends a treatment on TFM as soon as possible.
4. Les Monostory reported a water Chestnut infestation in several bodies of water in region 5. He was wondering if the DEC will implement a program to combat this problem.
5. A recent Lake Erie survey revealed that 70% of fishermen were in favor of reducing the minimum legal size of walleye from 15" to 12" in the New York waters of Lake Erie. Many fishermen however feel that the vast majority of these fish are in near shore shallow water and very likely survive after being caught and released. Offshore water charter captains report very few small walleyes are caught in the deeper water. They also felt that the near shore waters act as a nursery for the smaller walleyes until they grow and venture out into deeper waters. If a lot of these walleyes are caught, will it harm the future walleye population?
6. Some Region 5 waterways are experiencing a heavy infestation of water chestnut. Hopefully the NYSDEC will implement plans to eradicate this nonindigenous invader.
7. Members of the committee wonder if the NYSDEC is considering a pilot program of stocking the "wiper" which is a combination of white bass and striped bass. They are reportedly great fighters, excellent table fare and grow up to 12 pounds.
8. The inland trout stocking has become a serious problem as many landowners will not sign PFR forms to allow stocking on their property as they are worried about property damage and liability claims etc. 70% of inland trout stocking water will be lost in Erie County as an example. Are there enough public parks, bridges etc available for these fish? This seems to be a problem in many areas of the state.
9. Lake Erie fishing access is a major problem with Barcelona harbor closed until the middle of May and Sturgeon Point being closed for the season for break wall repairs. This 30 miles stretch of NY waters has, outside of Dunkirk, Cattaraugus Creek and the Safe Harbor in buffalo very little access to the lake especially for small boat fishermen.

Submitted by Joe Fischer

NYSCC Fisheries Chair