



**Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



**A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY FOR
LAKE TROUT STOCKING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN
SOUTHERN LAKE HURON**

WHEREAS, recreational and survey catch rates of lake trout in southern Lake Huron near the thumb area of Michigan are near all-time lows;

WHEREAS, natural reproduction of lake trout in southern Lake Huron was increasing when the Lake Huron Committee made the decision to cease stocking in the southern part of the lake; yet, the current level of natural reproduction is lower than needed to replace lost stocking for the fishery;

WHEREAS, the issue of lake trout stocking is very complex and there are multiple scientific unknowns regarding the impacts on commercial fishers, the changes in predation pressure, the food web and other factors;

WHEREAS, exceedance of bycatch of lake trout in the southern basin of Lake Huron is an issue impacting lake whitefish commercial fishers on both sides of the border;

WHEREAS, recreational fishing opportunities in the southern basin of Lake Huron have become limited since the Chinook salmon crash of 2003 and, walleye and other game species are limited in the southern basin of Lake Huron;

WHEREAS, when the Lake Huron Committee made the decision to cease stocking of lake trout in the U.S. waters of southern Lake Huron, it was likely that predation was the primary cause of declining relative survival of stocked lake trout; however, current (2018-current) predation pressure is unknown;

WHEREAS, the Lake Huron Committee adopted the *Strategy for Reducing Lake Trout Stocking in Lake Huron* to guide lake trout stocking in 2016 (implemented with the 2018 stocking year), based on positive trends in wild lake trout reproduction;

WHEREAS, lake trout stocking in Michigan waters of Lake Huron was reduced from 1.43 million fish per year to 540,000 fish per year, representing an overall reduction in annual stocking by 62%;

The opinions expressed here are those of the independent committee of advisors and not necessarily those of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives, from indigenous, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, environmental, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors, and appointed by the commission. Canadian advisors are appointed by the commission.

WHEREAS, lake trout stocking in southern Lake Huron was eliminated as a result of this reduction so that all lake trout are currently only stocked in the northern basin where natural reproduction is stronger; and

WHEREAS, since the decision to reduce stocking in 2016, lake trout biomass has steadily declined in the southern basin of Lake Huron.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Canadian and U.S. Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission urge the Lake Huron Committee to review the *Strategy for Reducing Lake Trout Stocking in Lake Huron* in consultation with the range of stakeholders (e.g. recreational, commercial and Indigenous fishers, science and environmental communities) concerned with the status of the fishery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that additional scientific evidence for the decision-making process be pursued by the Lake Huron Committee.

Passed unanimously

May 25, 2021

U.S. and Canadian Committee of Advisors