



Fishin" Tales III

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE GREAT
LAKES SPORTFISHERY SINCE 1974

Volume 6 Issue 2

February, 2023



January 31, 2023 Membership Meeting—Club 54
Recap

DAS monthly membership meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month.

Get the Latest Event Updates Online

You can still check us out:
On the Interweb

www.detroitsteelheaders.com

Post to the message board and check out the entire site.

On the Facebook

www.facebook.com/detroitarea/steelheaders

On the OFFICIAL GROUP PAGE

Check out the new Facebook group page where you can post at: www.facebook.com/groups/

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Kurt Stracka: Ice fishing demonstration.

USCG licensed Captain Kurt Stracka has fished these waters for the past 20 years and has extensive knowledge of fish movements and patterns, from spring to fall each season brings its own locations, and patterns.

22194 Tustin Rd., Tustin, Michigan, 4968

231-878-2520

indepthprecisioncharters@yahoo.com

The 2023 Angler of the Year season is about to begin. USCG licensed captain Kurt gave up tips and valuable information to improve your catch.

Our February 28 speaker is Jim Winfield, President of Winfield Tackle Co. & RP2 Custom Rods located in Harrison Twp, MI. Winfield Tackle Co. builds custom Muskie, Salmon, and Walleye fishing Rods. Jim also is the Captain of "Reel People" Sportfishing Charters in Ludington Michigan. Captain Jim was scheduled to be our speaker on June 28, 2022 at River Bends Park last year, when an unexpected health issue prevented him from joining us. Very glad Jim can join us this year and looking forward to him sharing his expertise. Please give Jim a warm welcome.

Jim Winfield, President of Winfield Tackle Co. located in Harrison Twp, MI.
Captain of "Reel People" Sportfishing Charters in Ludington Michigan.

2023 SKIPPER OF THE YEAR (SOTY) BOAT TROLLING TOURNAMENTS

Reprint

There will be 7 Boat Trolling tournaments this year:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PORT</u>	<u>PORT CAPTAIN</u>	<u>TIMES</u>
MAY 6	ST JOE	JOE DELISI	6 AM – 1 PM
MAY 20-21	GRAND HAVEN	JIM ZANKE	6 AM – 1 PM (Saturday) 6 AM – 11 AM (Sunday)
JUNE 3	HARBOR BEACH	JOE VON GRABE	5:30 AM – 1 PM
JULY 8	PRESQUE ISLE	BLAISE PEWINSKI	5:30 AM - 1 PM
JULY 22	MANISTEE	SCOTT CAMPBELL	6 AM – 1 PM
AUGUST 5	LUDINGTON	FRED CHARTIER	6 AM – 1 PM
AUGUST 12	FRANKFORT	NATE CASE	6 AM – 1 PM

A Skipper’s best 4 tournament scores will count towards the Skipper of the Year Award. The entry fee will be \$15 per person. The optional Big Fish bet remains at \$20 / boat and is divided into 3 separate pools: Big Salmon for \$10 per boat, Big Steelhead for \$5 per boat, and Big Lake Trout for \$5 per boat. All 3 pools must be entered to participate. Tournament entry fees and Big Fish bets will be collected at the weigh-in and lunch will be provided at the weigh-in.

There are no Skipper’s meetings prior to the tournament. Skippers should register at least 3 days prior to the tournament. Entry forms are available on the DAS website: detroitsteelheaders.com/2023-entry-form.

Tournament rules are posted on the DAS website: detroitsteelheaders.com/2023-schedule. For more information about our boat trolling tournaments contact Chairman Bob Feisel (248-765-2504).

We look forward to seeing you on the water!

2023 Detroit Area Steelheaders Angler of the Year Event Schedule

Date	Location	<u>Reprint</u> Port Captain/Coordinator
January 21, 2023	Metro Beach (Perch)	Gaspare Aragona
January 28, 2023	Selfridge DNR Ramp (Perch)	Dan Chisholm
February 25, 2023	Mitchells Bay CA (Perch)	Bob Paradise
March 25, 2023	Manistee River (Steelhead)	Roger Paradise
April 22, 2023	AuSable River (Steelhead)	Gary Gross
May 13, 2023	St. Clair River Algonac (Walleye)	Tom Gorguze
June 10, 2023	St. Clair River St. Clair Harbor (Walleye)	Rob Pinsky
June 10/11, 2023*	Auburn Hills Kids Outing *This will not be scored as an Angler outing. It is a separate event.	
July 15, 2023	Au Gres (Walleye)	Gary Gross
September 9, 2023	Lake St. Clair Harley Ensign Ramp (Perch)	Gaspare Aragona
September 30, 2023	Manistee River (Steelhead/Salmon)	J. Anderson/L.Gamblin
October 14, 2023	AuSable River (Steelhead/Salmon)	Gary Gross
October 28, 2023	Manistee River/Pier/Beach (Steelhead)	M. Wyrick/A. Kulpa
November 4, 2023	Manistee River/Pier/Surf (Steelhead)	Bob Paradise
December 9, 2023	Caseville River (Lake Trout)	Rob Pinsky

Due to rising costs, entry into any Angler of the Year (AOTY) event costs a mandatory \$15/person to register and cover the cost of the shore lunch during the weigh-in. The event port-captain orders the lunch, based upon the number of registrations. Therefore, members who have registered for the event are required to attend the weigh-in and pay the registration fee, even if you do not have a catch to weigh-in.

There is also an optional \$10/person fee to enter the big fish competition. All State and local rules apply. All perch outings include an 8 inch minimum requirement to qualify at weigh-in.

DETROIT AREA STEELHEADERS, INC.
P.O. Box 297, Sterling Heights, MI. 48311-297

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member - \$35 Yearly | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal - \$35 Yearly | Amt. Paid \$_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (65 & over)- \$20 Yearly | <input type="checkbox"/> Address Change only | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior (under 16) - \$20 Yearly (Electronic Newsletter) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Event Rate (New Members Only)- \$20 | | |

NAME		DATE	
ADDRESS			
CITY, STATE, ZIP		HOME PHONE	CELL PHONE
BOAT NAME		E-MAIL ADDRESS	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Assistants
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- Mark Williams**
 Lake Michigan Citizens Advisory
- Mark Wyrick**
 Raffles
- PAUL GJELDUM**
 Awards
- CHRIS NYTKO**
 Facebook
- Anna Kulpa**
 Photography, Raffles

We had 18 club members in attendance for the outing. The day started at 7am and was very cold and dark outside. By 8am it was day light and the perch started to bite. However, fishing was slow. There were 9 members that ended up catching weighable fish. There was a total of 25 fish weighed.

1st Place: Dan Chisholm

2nd Place: Gaspare Aragona

3rd Place: Kevin Longley

Big Fish payout went to Dan Chisholm in first place, Bob Paradise in second place, and Mark Carlson took third place. There was a tie for first place and the tie breaker was the total amount of fish. Dan had 5 fish and Bob had 4 fish. We all enjoyed lunch after fishing. Looks like 2023 is underway now! See everyone at the next outing!

Gaspare



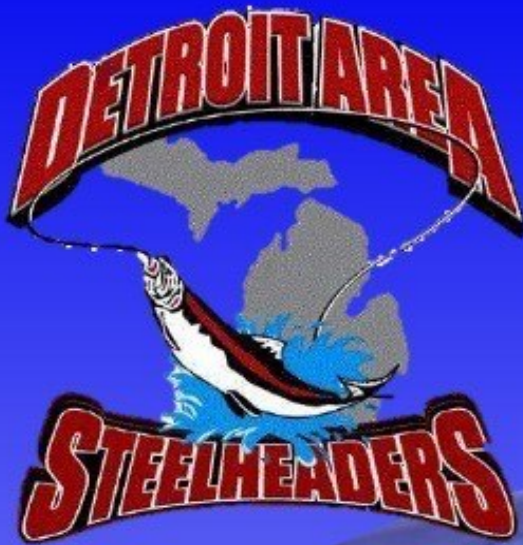
2023 AOTY Individual Outing Results

by Last Dime » Sat Jan 21, 2023 6:26 pm

AOTY Metro Beach Outing (Perch) - Sat. Jan 21, 2023

	Angler's Name	Entry Fe	Big Fish P	5 Tot Wgt (oz.)	Qty Fsh	Fish Pts	Longest Fish (in.)	Tot Pt	Place
1	DANIEL CHISHOLM	\$15.00	\$10.00	27.74	5	25	9.75	52.74	1
2	GASPARE ARAGONA	\$15.00	\$10.00	23.46	5	25	9.00	48.46	2
3	KEVIN LONGLEY	\$15.00	\$10.00	22.70	5	25	8.88	47.70	3
4	BOB PARADISE	\$15.00	\$10.00	22.72	4	20	9.75	42.72	4
5	ROB PINSKEY	\$15.00	\$10.00	9.89	2	10	8.75	19.89	5
6	MARK CARLSON	\$15.00	\$10.00	7.27	1	5	9.25	12.27	6
7	JAMES ANDERSON	\$15.00	\$10.00	4.96	1	5	8.25	9.96	7
8	SAMUEL ANDERSON	\$15.00	\$10.00	4.66	1	5	8.25	9.66	8
9	MARK WYRICK	\$15.00	\$10.00	4.41	1	5	8.13	9.41	9
10	DON JASMAN	\$15.00	\$10.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10
10	KYLE COVIK	\$15.00	\$0.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10
10	ANNA KULPA	\$15.00	\$10.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10
10	BLAISE PEWINSKI	\$15.00	\$10.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10
10	BLAISE PEWINSKI IV	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10
10	BOB KSIONZEK	\$15.00	\$10.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10
10	BRAD WALTON	\$15.00	\$10.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10
10	ZBIGNIEW PIOTROW	\$15.00	\$0.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	10





23RD ANNUAL SPORTSMAN'S DINNER

Saturday March 4th, 2023 - Doors @5 Dinner @6

\$80 per person includes Beer & Soft Drinks

Email: Cvvent@gmail.com for Advanced Tickets.

Gun Raffles, Table Raffles, Meat Coolers,
Fishing Charers, Hunting Trips, 50/50 and MORE!

MC: Billy Hoffman - Best Selling Outdoors Author
and Headliner of the DadBod Comedy Tour

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American Polish Cultural Center
2975 E. Maple rd Troy MI, 48083

The 2023 Board of Directors convened on January 17 to select officer positions for President (Jim Zanke), Vice-President (Bob Feisel), Treasurer (Rodney Elnick), and Recording Secretary (James Anderson). At-Large board members filled out the remaining committee assignments which can be seen in the right hand margin on page three of this newsletter.

Detroit Area Steelheader Meeting Dates and Location

As a general rule all membership meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month. There are instances where a holiday may cause an adjustment for that month. Indoor meetings during cold months begin at 7:30 pm. Meetings in the River Bends Park* will begin at 7:30 in May but will begin earlier as we must adjust for earlier nightfall.

Meeting Date	Time	Location	Speaker
February 28, 2023	7:30	Club 54 37722 Van Dyke Ave Sterling Hts, MI	Jim Winfield (Winfield Tackle) Charter Captain Ludington
March 28, 2023	7:30	Club 54	Anthony Mareschini St Clair/Detroit River Walleye
April 25, 2023	7:30	Club 54	Club Member Joe von Grabe
May 30, 2023	7:30	River Bends Park, 22 Mil Rd Shelby Twp. MI.	National Weather Service (NWS) Richard Pollman
June 27, 2023	7:30	River Bends Park	TBD
July 25, 2023	7:30	River Bends Park	TBD
August 29, 2023	7:30	River Bends Park	TBD (Club Potluck Picnic?)
September 26, 2023	7:30	Club 54	TBD
October 31, 2023	7:30	Club 54	TBD
November 28, 2023	7:30	Club 54	TBD
December 19, 2023	7:30	Club 54 Annual Mtg	Elections, awards, celebration & Salmon Clause

The following five pages of dialog are cut/paste from the January 13, Great Lakes Angler Magazine. Authored by Captain Mike Schoonveld. The full magazine article includes interesting pictures and illustrations that make for a better read. The illustrations are not included in this excerpt. You may wish to read the magazine for the full picture and illustrations.

How Old Is That Fish?

Every fish starts out small and grows progressively larger as it gets older. But just as with salmon, the older a year-class of fish becomes, the wider the size range of the fish in that class will become. Some will be smaller or larger than most of their brothers, sisters or cousins.

I called a fishing buddy a few days ago for a fishing report and he detailed the results of his latest trip to Lake Michigan. "We caught... (blah, blah, blah)" and ended by saying "and one of the kings was a big four-year-old." If you've hung around places where king salmon fishermen are frequently found, you've heard guys telling about catching a mix of two-, three- and four-year-old salmon.

I was talking with a Lake Michigan fish biologist recently and he said something about "this fall's run of three-year-olds."

"What about this year's run of four-year-olds?" I asked.

He looked as puzzled to me as I probably did to him. Then it dawned on both of us we were talking about the same thing. We just referred to it differently.

When my biologist friend was talking about this year's run of three-year-old kings, he was referring to the "nearly four-year-olds." When my fishing friend talked with me about catching a four-year-old, he also was referring to a fish approaching its final birthday.

Who was "more correct?" Now that I've given it some thought, I think the biologist was right—or at least more precise.

I'll explain it this way. Let's say I have a three-year-old son. If I tell you I have a three-year old, you know my future fishing buddy is somewhere between his third birthday and fourth birthday. Perhaps I'll say he's three and a half or almost four, but if I'm filling out a form, I'll list his age as three until he actually has his fourth birthday. Regardless, if his birthday is in October and I tell you how old he is in July, I won't say he's four.

Neither do biologists when they are talking about the age of the fish with which they are working. What they will do is list the salmon (or other fish) by the number of birthdays they've had and then add a plus sign after the number.

So the king salmon my friend reported to be a four-year-old was really a three-plus-year-old (3+)—or was it? All he had to judge it by was its size.

SIZE VS. AGE

One would think since all Great Lakes kings spawn at approximately the same time, spend most of their lives in the same lake and grow relatively fast, it would be easy to tell how old a king salmon is, just by its size. They should be roughly the same size on their first birthday. They should all be similarly sized on their second hatching anniversary and all of the 2+ fish should be sized different than the 3+ aged fish.

In that same conversation with my biologist friend, I found out the truth. He admitted he used to think he was good at aging Great Lake salmon strictly by size. He now admits, these days, it's not that easy.

Before the abundance of alewives in the lakes faltered and most every salmon in the lakes had plenty to eat, regardless of where in the lake it was swimming, perhaps age-guessing by fish-size was an almost sure bet. With a steady and ready food supply, most of the fish grew at similar rates. That's not at all true, these days.

Nowadays, the total abundance of alewives (the main prey of most Great Lakes king salmon) is just a fraction of their pre-mussel invasion abundance and the alewives which are in the lakes are not distributed evenly. There are few alewives left in Lake Huron at all. In Lake Michigan some areas seem to be blessed with alewives, while other areas are as desolate as Lake Huron. Lake Ontario is somewhere in between and the king salmon in Lake Superior have never had an abundance of alewives.

Remember also, for the past decade or longer the actual number of king salmon in each year-class has been highly variable. Stocking efforts have trended down as fishery managers try to bring balance to the predator/prey relationships in each lake and then Mother Nature upsets these management efforts by either under or over performing in places where natural reproduction occurs.

Couple the plight of the alewives with drastic swings in king salmon abundance and the result is years with mostly hungry salmon in the lakes along with years with plenty of food and fast-growing fish, at least in some areas. If every king salmon had exactly the same amount to eat, they'd all weigh within a few ounces of each other. Instead, weights of same-age salmon now vary widely based almost entirely on how much they have been able to eat.

The coded wire tag program has proved this decisively—at least for hatchery-reared king salmon. For several years all the king salmon stocked in the Great Lakes were injected with a tiny, micro-tag when they were only a few months old. The tag positively identified each salmon's age, the hatchery where it was reared, the location it was subsequently stocked and several other details more interesting to biologists than fishermen.

As these tagged salmon lived, grew and migrated through the lakes, fisheries technicians made a special effort to collect as many of these coded wire tags as they could gather. The tags were removed from the fish, examined and pages of information was recorded on spread sheets, compiled into charts and explained with graphs showing information about the tagged fish's travels, growth rate, longevity and other details.

The coded wire tag program proved judging angler-caught king salmon strictly by size to be a totally inaccurate rule of thumb. Whether the tags the researchers recovered came from net captures, from sport angler caught fish or from fish actually making their spawning run, the data shows quite an overlap on the size vs. age chart. There are fully mature, 3+ aged fish on their spawning run which don't weigh 10 pounds and others which weigh 30 pounds. Those unexpectedly small fries or big guys aren't just outliers, either. A rough average in recent years shows only about half of the 3+ aged kings in late summer or fall are "normal" sized for Great Lakes kings while about a third are under-sized and the remainder are outsized.

There are also significant numbers of age 2+ kings which weigh in the teens, as well. The next time you catch a king salmon in a Great Lake you can guess its age if you wish. Chances are you will be wrong as much as you are right. On the other hand, now that most Great Lakes kings are not fitted with coded wire tags, your guess will be as good as the next persons.

Since 2017, due to budget restraints and other issues, only a small portion of the hatchery kings are tagged with coded wires. (All hatchery-spawned king salmon do still have adipose clips however, so hatchery vs. wild-spawned fish can be differentiated at a glance.)

Since none of the Great Lakes wild fish and only a portion of the hatchery fish can be aged definitively by examining coded tags and aging them by size is more guess than golly, can fish biologists determine the age of a particular, untagged fish definitively? Certainly, but they'll have to do it the old fashioned way—just as fish biologists have to do with most of the other species of fish in the Great Lakes.

GROWTH RATES

Every fish starts out small and grows progressively larger as it gets older. But just as with salmon, the older a year-class of fish becomes, the wider the size range of the fish in that class will become. Some will be smaller or larger than most of their brothers, sisters or cousins.

By the second or third year for most predator fish, some of the two-year-olds will be larger than some of the three-year-olds and the overlap of size and age will only become greater as the fish continue to age. On the really old specimens—"old" depending on the species of fish being discussed—it will become even more difficult since growth rates slow as a fish matures.

A walleye (in Lake Erie) may go from a fraction of an inch long when it hatches to 10 inches long in its first year. It could easily be 14 inches on its second birthday and maybe 17 inches the following year. At that rate, it would be a trophy-sized 30-incher by age six or seven.

Right? Not at all. First, it will depend on whether the walleye is a male or female. Most males won't ever grow to be 30-inchers. They'll die from old age first. Second, and more important, is how fish growth slows with age. In Lake Erie, studies have shown 10-year-old female walleyes "average" 27 inches long. In Saginaw Bay, the average age 10+ walleye is 25 inches. In Lake Nipigon, far to the north with a totally different climate, growing season and food base, the "average" 10-year-old walleye is only 20 inches long.

HOW DO THEY KNOW?

Without fin clips, coded wire tags or other "man-made" markers to identify individual fish or groups of fish, how can a biologist definitively determine a particular fish's age? The easiest way is to use a microscope to examine the scales of a fish to reveal its age. It's the only way to do it if the fish is to be released. A scale can be popped off and the fish will swim away no worse off than you would be if someone pulled out a tuft of your hair.

Fish growth is seasonal here in Great Lakes region. Fish, whether they are salmon, walleyes, perch or minnows, grow relatively fast in the summer months and go into a slow-growth period in the winter.

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Fish growth is seasonal here in Great Lakes region. Fish, whether they are salmon, walleyes, perch or minnows, grow relatively fast in the summer months and go into a slow-growth period in the winter.

So do trees and that’s what makes the “tree rings” you can see on a tree stump. Count the rings on a cut-off stump and quickly learn the age of the tree.

Fish scales show “rings” similar to age rings on a tree. Biologists count the rings apparent on a fish’s scale and learn how old a particular fish was when the scale sample was taken.

Examining scales is quick, easy and in-expensive. But on slow growing and especially on slow-growing older fish, the read-the-scales method isn’t perfectly adequate. Better accuracy (though it requires killing the fish) is to use a high power microscope look at a cross section of bone from a fish—the cross section cut from a vertebra or more commonly from the fish’s otoliths—a bone-like nugget which grows in a fish’s head. The otoliths or fish bones will also show fast and slow “growth rings” just on a scale or on a tree.

Whether a fish is a salmon, a walleye, bass, perch or alewife, its size and growth rate is the best predictor of the health of a lake’s fish population. Skinny, stunted or at least fish growing at substandard rates is a sign something is out of whack in the lake. High growth rates would seem to be good and can be a positive sign. It could also mean the predator/prey relationship is skewed heavily to the prey side.

That was the reason salmon were first put in the Great Lakes. The lakes were full of alewives and little else. The salmon grew extremely fast.

What fisheries biologists and managers strive for is average or normal growth rates. That’s why size and bag limits are higher on Saginaw Bay than at Bay de Noc for walleyes. That’s why king salmon stocking numbers have fluctuated widely and wildly in past decades. The biologists are striving for that sweet spot where predator fish are growing at normal rates and the prey populations are stable.

To find that sweet spot, however, they first have to be able to answer the question posed in this story’s title. “How old is that fish?”

The 2023 Ultimate Fishing Show at the Novi Suburban Collection was a huge success from start to finish. President Jim Zanke organized the Detroit Steelheaders (DAS) booth with a new look and membership responded by enthusiastically manning the booth that resulted in 15 new memberships and a few renewals. Show attendees were attracted to the wide variety of colorful pictures depicting all forms of fish and fishing techniques. Attendees that checked us out, left the booth with all the information they needed to know what DAS is all about. Meeting schedules, fishing outing schedules, Wild Game Dinner fund raiser flyer, and everything else they may want to know about DAS.

The enthusiastic support of those members who staffed the booth, may have been what created the interest that made people want to join. Congratulations Jim and DAS for a job well done.

Expired Flares

Have you ever wondered what to do with expired flares that you have on your boat? As I cleaned out my boat locker last month, I came across a brand new, still in the wrapper, package of flares that had expired in October 2022. I must have won the package a few years back and forgot about them. The flares on my boat are up-to-date so I have no use for an expired set of flares. What do I do with them? Thought about this for a few minutes and then started making phone calls. County environmental disposal? "Maybe, but once a year and not sure how eager they are to take them". "Call back later". Township Clerks office? "Not sure, try the Coast Guard". Coast Guard? Bingo! The Officer I spoke with said, "what I do, is keep up-to-date flares on the boat for safety and to fulfill the legal requirement, and keep the expired flares on the boat as spares in case I need them in an emergency. They are probably going to be functional for a couple of years past expiration before you can no longer trust them". "When I need to dispose of them, I take them to the local fire department and they dispose of them for me". Bingo! I called my local fire department and they concurred. Problem solved! I placed the expired flares in the boats safety "bail bag" for emergency and future disposal.

Detroit Area Steelheaders
P.O. Box 297
Sterling Heights, MI. 48311-297

Place Stamp
Here

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

MEETING NOTICE—PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE GREAT
LAKES SPORTFISHERY SINCE 1974

Membership Expires:



Upcoming Dates

February 14	Board of Directors Mtg
February 25	AOTY Mitchells Bay CA (Perch)
February 28	Membership Mtg
February (?)	A Second AOTY Outing IF Possible
March 4	23 Annual Sportsmans Din ner

**This, from St. Basil The Great:
A tree is known by it's fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed
is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he
who plants kindness gathers love.**