

Lake Superior Summer Creel Fishing Report

The Lake Superior summer creel survey has been conducted annually since 1969. The summer creel survey provides estimates of angling pressure, harvest and catch rates along the North Shore of Lake Superior. The survey focuses mainly on lake trout, Chinook salmon and coho salmon.

Two creel clerks conduct the summer creel survey from the Memorial Day weekend through the first full weekend in October. The Lower Shore clerk interviews anglers from Duluth to Two Harbors, while the Upper Shore clerk interviews anglers from Twin Points to Hovland.

The Lake Superior Summer Creel Survey has ended so there will no longer be weekly fishing updates. The updates will begin again next spring (usually in early to mid-April), when the Spring Creel survey is conducted

Fishing reports are updated on the web on Fridays at
<http://mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/report.html> or
by calling our office at 218-525-0853 and selecting 1 for the updated fishing report

Update 9/30/11

Lower Shore- Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at Lakehead Marina in Duluth, and at McQuade Access and Two Harbors. Pressure was moderate at the Duluth Charter dock and Knife River and light at Rice's Point. In the Duluth area, anglers had fair to good success catching lake trout at 40 to 60 feet over deeper water, to about 100 feet. The best lake trout action was in the Two Harbors area, where anglers did very well jigging off the Stewart River and off the breakwall in Two Harbors. We have reports of pink salmon in several rivers on the Lower Shore, among them the Stewart, Knife, Sucker and French rivers. They are likely in other rivers as well. Lake surface water temperatures were in the low 40s F.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Angling pressure has been generally light the past week, although it was moderate at Twin Points, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais when weather permitted. At Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais, anglers reported excellent action for large lake trout in nearshore waters. In the past several days anglers caught many lake trout in the 25 to 35 inch range, weighing 5 to 15 pounds, in water 20 to 80 feet deep. At Twin Points and Silver Bay anglers caught smaller lake trout, from 17 to 20 inches, in deeper water. A few Chinook salmon from 19 to 22 inches were caught in deep water, and some small Chinook and coho salmon in the 12 to 15 inch range were also caught. Many pink salmon are present in the Temperance, Cascade and Brule rivers, and lower numbers have been observed in other tributaries. Lake surface water temperature has been in the lower 50s F.

Update 9/23/11

Lower Shore- Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was moderate at Lakehead marina, McQuade Access, Knife River and Two Harbors, and light at the Duluth Charter Dock and Rice's Point. Good catches of lake trout were observed at the Duluth Charter Dock, Lakehead Marina and Two Harbors. In the Duluth area, anglers had good success trolling for lake trout at 40 to 60 feet in water from 80 feet to 250 feet. Farther up the shore, anglers had very good success jigging for lake trout at 80 feet out of Two Harbors, including just off the lighthouse. They also had good success trolling at 200 feet off the Stewart River and trolling over humps off the breakwall in Two Harbors. Charters caught a few Chinook salmon at around 40 feet. Surface water temperatures were in the mid to upper-40s F.

Upper Shore- Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was moderate to light at Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais and light at other stations. Anglers from Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais noted that lake trout fishing has been difficult on the Upper Shore. Some nice sized lake trout have been caught at 100 to 140 feet in depth. A few large lakera in the 10 to 15 pound range were caught, although anglers reported them to be scattered. A few Chinook salmon were caught at Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais. Some Chinooks weighed between 2 and 4 pounds, while the majority were smaller. Pink salmon numbers have increased in the larger tributaries, while there is not enough water in the smaller tributaries to permit access from the lake. Numbers of pink salmon in the Temperance, Cascade and Brule rivers are moderate compared to past years. Surface water temperatures on the lake were between 47 and 50 degrees F.

Update 9/15/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at McQuade Public Access and Two Harbors, moderate at Lakehead Marina, Rice's Point and Knife River and light at the Duluth Charter Dock. Lake trout fishing was good to very good in the Duluth area and very good in the Two Harbors area. The best lake trout fishing was at Two Harbors, where anglers often got their limits. Lake trout were caught at depths ranging from 60 to 165 feet. Many of these were caught jigging over deeper water, from 160 to 200 feet. A few were caught at around 80 feet in front of the Two Harbors lighthouse. Lake trout were also caught near the bottom at 150 feet. In the Duluth area, anglers had good luck fishing for lake trout in the top 80 feet of the water column. A few Chinook salmon were caught in the Duluth area and several small coho salmon were caught near the surface off Stony Point. Surface water temperatures in the Duluth area were in the mid-60s F., while from Knife River to Two Harbors surface temperatures were in the mid 50s F.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was moderate at Grand Marais, light to moderate at Silver Bay and Taconite Harbor, and light at Twin Points and Hovland. Lake trout fishing was fair from Twin Points to Taconite Harbor and good at Grand Marais. Anglers have mainly been fishing near shore in water less than 200 feet deep. They have had good luck catching lake trout in the 22 to 30 inch range, especially at Grand Marais. Salmon numbers were low, and the Chinooks that were caught were small, from 16 to 20 inches. Several coho salmon, ranging in size up to 22 inches, were caught in Grand Marais. Pink salmon have begun to enter the rivers on the Upper Shore. Pink salmon have recently been sighted in the Temperance, Cascade and Brule rivers. Surface water temperatures were in the mid- to upper 40s F.

Update 9/9/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at the Duluth Charter Dock, Lakehead Marina, McQuade Public Access and Knife River; fishing pressure was moderate at Two Harbors and light at Rice's Point. Fishing was good to very good for lake trout. Charters and other anglers fishing the Duluth area had the best success catching lake trout in the upper 60 feet of the water column. Anglers fishing out of Knife River and other sites farther up the shore caught lake trout near the bottom at 100 to 140 feet and at over 200 feet off the breakwall at Two Harbors. Several Chinook salmon were also caught in the Duluth area in the top 50 feet of the water column. Surface water temperatures were in the lower 60s F. in the Duluth area and in the upper 50s F. between Knife River and Two Harbors.

Upper Shore- Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was moderate at all Upper Shore stations. Although weather conditions were favorable for most of the reporting period, fishing remained difficult but good along the Upper Shore. Charters from Twin Points, Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais, as well as experienced anglers accounted for much of the fishing success this past week. They had good success catching lake trout in deep water structure areas, between 120 and 200 feet. Most of these lake trout were between 17 and 20 inches, although a few larger fish also entered the catch. Larger lake trout in the 6 to 12 pound range were reported by Silver Bay and Grand Marais anglers fishing farther off shore, although anglers described the action as slow. Chinook and coho salmon have declined in the catch and most of the Chinook salmon caught were small fish, in the 16 to 20 inch range. Although pink salmon have all but disappeared in the lake fishery, our clerk has not seen them in streams yet. Surface water temperatures ranged between 47 and 52 degrees F.

Update 9/2/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at McQuade Public Access, Knife River and Two Harbors, moderate at Rice's Point and light at Lakehead Marina and the Duluth Charter Dock. Anglers found lake trout near the bottom at 100 to 120 feet and in the top 40 feet of water over various depths. Charters are fishing a mile or more off the Lester River with lines set both deep and shallow. Fishing was fair to good for lake trout in these areas. A few salmon were caught from Duluth to Two Harbors, in the top 40 feet of water. Water temperatures were mostly in the low 40s F. this past week.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was heavy at Silver Bay and Grand Marais, moderate at Taconite Harbor and light at Twin Points and Hovland. Lake trout were widely scattered and fishing was difficult; however, good numbers of lake trout were caught offshore in water deeper than 80 feet. Large lake trout from 25 to 35 inches were reported from Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais. Salmon were also caught in deeper waters. Coho salmon were between 19 and 22 inches. Pink salmon appeared in the catch from Silver Bay to Grand Marais. Their appearance suggests they are close to entering the rivers to spawn. Surface water temperatures averaged around 40 degrees F.

Update 8/26/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was moderate at the Duluth Charter Dock and at McQuade Public Access and light at other stations on the Lower Shore. Lake trout fishing was good to very good on the Lower Shore. In the Duluth area, lake trout were caught about 1 to 2 miles off the Lakewood Pumping Station at depths of 10 to 80 feet over various depths. Lake trout were also caught at various depths over deep water at Larsmont. At Two Harbors, anglers had success catching lake trout either jigging at 150 feet or trolling between 120 and 160 feet. Both coho and Chinook salmon were caught by Duluth anglers; in shallow water at Larsmont and in 20 feet or less water at the ore docks at Two Harbors. Surface water temperatures were around 60 F. off Lester River. However, farther up the shore temperatures remained in the low 40s F.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Angler pressure was moderate at Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais and light at Twin Points and Hovland. Lake trout fishing was fair on the Upper Shore. Anglers reported that the fish were widely scattered, both vertically and horizontally. Experienced anglers reported that lake trout were difficult to catch, as they could not be located on deepwater structure that usually produces consistent catches at this time of year, and that catches of suspended lake trout or shallow water lake trout were also inconsistent. Nevertheless, a few large lake trout, weighing from 15 to 23 pounds, were reported from Silver Bay, Grand Marais and Hovland. Although coho salmon and Chinook salmon were caught at most stations, their numbers were very few. These were caught between 40 and 100 feet. A few pink salmon were also caught at Grand Marais. Surface water temperatures averaged in the low 40s F.

Update 8/19/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure heavy at Lakehead Marina, moderate at the Duluth Charter Dock and at Rice's Point and low at McQuade Access and Two Harbors. Lake trout fishing was fair on the Lower Shore. Anglers from McQuade Public Access caught lake trout at about 30 feet over deep water. Lake trout were also caught between 25 and 80 feet between Knife River and Two Harbors, and a few lake trout were taken in shallow water in front of the ore docks in Two Harbors. Most of the lake trout were in the 20-22 inch range. A few salmon were also recorded during this past week. Chinook salmon were caught in shallow water between McQuade Access and Stony Point, and a few coho salmon were caught in front of the ore docks in Two Harbors. Surface water temperatures were between 67 and 73 degrees F.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was moderate to heavy at all Upper Shore stations except Hovland, where pressure was light. Lake trout fishing was good to very good in the past week. Most of the lake trout were between 4 and 10 pounds and were caught suspended above the bottom at depths of 50 to 150 feet. We also have reports from Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais that several large lake trout in the 16 to 25 pound range were caught last week. Coho and Chinook salmon were scattered, and fair to good catches were observed at most stations on the Upper Shore. The best catches came from nearshore waters within 100 feet of the surface. The cohos were between 18 and 22 inches with the largest weighing 3.5 pounds, while the Chinook salmon were between 22 and 29 inches and weighed up to about 8 pounds. Some larger Chinook salmon were reported from most stations: one weighing nearly 20 pounds was reportedly caught at Silver Bay. Pink salmon were recorded in small numbers at Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais. Surface water temperatures were in the mid-40s F.

Update 8/12/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at the Duluth Charter Dock and Knife River, and moderate at other locations. Anglers fishing for lake trout had the best success in the Duluth area during the past week. Charters reported very good lake trout fishing, with the best success fishing on the edges of the muddy water that has come down rivers from recent rains. A few Chinook and coho salmon were also caught in Duluth area. Anglers fishing farther up the shore at McQuade Public access had only fair success. Surface water temperatures were in the 60s F during this period.

Upper Shore- Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was heavy at Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais, moderate at Twin Points and Silver Bay and light at Hovland. Very good lake trout fishing was recorded at Silver Bay, Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais. Anglers reported the best lake trout fishing in offshore waters, which tended to be warmer than nearshore waters during this period. Lake trout from these offshore water tended to be larger (in the 4 to 10 pound range) than in waters nearer to shore, where most fish were in the 2 to 3 pound range. Both Chinook and coho salmon were reported from all stations. Taconite Harbor had success catching good numbers of coho salmon in the 17 to 20 inch range, and weighing about 2 pounds. Anglers in Grand Marais had good success catching Chinook salmon. They caught several in the 20 to 22 inch range and a few as large as 28 inches and weighing about 8 pounds. A 13 pound Chinook salmon was caught during the Fisherman's Picnic. Anglers from most stations have reported catching a few pink salmon; however, our

clerk has not recorded any. Surface water temperatures were in the upper 50s at the beginning of this reporting period. Winds from the north and west caused temperatures to drop into the low 40s F. later in the week.

Update 8/5/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at the Charter Dock in Duluth, McQuade Public Access and Two Harbors and moderate at other locations. Lake trout fishing was very good for charters from Duluth and for anglers at McQuade Public Access and Two Harbors. Most of the lake trout were caught at depths below 100 feet, although some were also caught between 60 to 100 feet. A few coho salmon were caught, mostly in the area from McQuade Public Access to Two Harbors, and a few Chinook salmon were also caught. Most of the salmon were caught in the top 40 feet of water, although several were also caught at depths from 140 to 200 feet. Surface water temperatures ranged from 62 to 70 degrees F.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was heavy at Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais and moderate at other Upper Shore stations. Lake trout fishing was good, but variable at Silver Bay and Taconite Harbor. Anglers caught most lake trout, which were between 17 and 22 inches, in deep water near structure, although we also have some reports of anglers having success fishing in the upper part of the water column over open water. Anglers at Grand Marais had very good success catching lake trout at a variety of depths. Some anglers still had good luck fishing deep water, while others had good success catching lake trout near the surface, both near and far from shore. Anglers at Twin Points reported some good catches of coho salmon, while anglers at Silver Bay reported salmon fishing had slowed down. There was scattered action for cohos in the 17 to 19 inch range at Taconite Harbor; very few Chinook salmon were caught at Taconite Harbor. Anglers had moderate success catching both coho and Chinook salmon out of Grand Marais. The cohos ranged from 17 to 20 inches and the Chinooks were in the 22 to 26 inch range. Surface water temperatures were in the upper 50s F.

Update 7/29/11

We're sorry we could not provide information on fishing on Lake Superior during the State Shutdown. This is the first report since then and covers the period from July 21 through July 28.

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at the Duluth Charter Dock, McQuade Public Access and Two Harbors, moderate at Rice's Point and Knife River and light at Lakehead Marina. Lake trout fishing was very good on the Lower Shore. In the Duluth area, many lake trout were caught by charters. Anglers in this area fished mostly between the Duluth entry and Lester River. Anglers from Two Harbors had excellent success fishing for lake trout, many anglers fishing just outside Burlington Bay. Anglers fishing from McQuade Public Access and Knife River also had good success catching lake trout. Most of the lake trout were caught between 60 and 100 feet. Coho salmon were caught in small numbers by anglers at all stations. Surface water temperatures ranged from 60 to 68 degrees F.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure was moderate to heavy at all stations except Hovland, where pressure was light. Lake trout fishing was good to very good on the Upper Shore. At Twin Points, there was good action for lake trout at a variety of depths; good numbers were caught from the surface down to 50 feet. Lake trout at Twin Points were from 18 to 26 inches. At Silver Bay, anglers reported good catches of lake trout far off shore over deep water, trolling lures within 100 feet of the surface. Anglers also reported good catches of lake trout in nearshore waters at a variety of depths, down to about 150 feet. Action for lake trout was slower at Taconite Harbor. However, there were some good catches of lake trout in the 18 to 26 inch range, mostly suspended within 100 feet of the surface over deep water. At Grand Marais, there were good catches of lake trout in the 19 to 30 inch range. Many fish were in the 6 to 9 pound range. Anglers reported good catches in nearshore waters from near the surface to 50 feet deep and some were caught in shallow water, less than 20 feet deep. These lake trout in shallow water were between 18 and 22 inches. Anglers fishing farther offshore targeted larger lake trout near the surface. A few coho salmon were caught at most stations. Cohos between 17 and 19 inches were generally caught near the surface in nearshore waters. A single Chinook salmon was caught at Silver Bay. Anglers at other stations reported that Chinook salmon were scarce. Surface water temperatures varied from 54 to 59 degrees F.

Update 6/30/11

Lower Shore-Duluth to Two Harbors: Fishing pressure was heavy at Rice's Point and Knife River, moderate at the Duluth Charter Dock and at McQuade Public Access, and light at Lakehead Marina and Two Harbors. Fishing pressure rose immediately after the weather improved. Catches were slow at first but picked up as the week progressed. Boats from

Duluth had good catches of lake trout, as did anglers fishing out of Knife River. Many lake trout were caught within 20 feet of the surface. Several coho salmon were creel at Knife River and a couple of Chinook salmon were recorded by our clerk at the Duluth Charter Dock and at Knife River. Surface water temperatures were in the upper 30s and low 40s F.

Upper Shore-Twin Points to Hovland: Fishing pressure picked up on the Upper Shore this past week. Good catches of lake trout in the 4 to 6 pound range were recorded from Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais.

Update 6/24/11

Fishing pressure on the North Shore was light along the whole North Shore. Consistent, strong winds from the east kept anglers off the lake for most of the past week. In the Duluth area, anglers still caught lake trout near the surface. Most of the activity was between the Lester River and McQuade Public Access. Farther up the shore, a few charters made it out in the rough weather. At Silver Bay and Taconite Harbor, a few lake trout from 17 to 22 inches were caught in water from 160 to 200 feet deep. Water temperatures in the Duluth area remained around 50 degrees F, whereas farther up the shore, temperatures were in the high 30s F.

Update 6/17/11

Fishing Pressure on the Lower Shore was light. Although anglers took advantage of good weather last weekend, rain and fog kept boaters off the lake for much of the rest of the week. Anglers in the Duluth area had good success catching both lake trout and coho salmon. Most of the lake trout were caught between 40 and 60 feet and salmon were caught in the top 40 feet or so. Fair to good catches of lake trout were also reported from McQuade Public Access, Knife River and Two Harbors. Surface water temperatures were between 40 and 50 degrees F.

Fishing pressure remained light on the Upper Shore during the past week. Lake trout fishing was slow in the Silver Bay area. Anglers there found smaller lake trout in the 16 to 19 inch range near the bottom at 170 to 200 feet. At Taconite Harbor, there were some good catches of lake trout fishing over deep water structure. The action was fair in Grand Marais, where most of the lake trout were caught near the bottom at 140 to 170 feet. As at Silver Bay, the lake trout tended to be small, mostly from 17 to 22 inches. There were a few reports of larger lake trout caught off river mouths. There were no reports of salmon along the Upper Shore. Surface water temperatures along the Upper Shore averaged around 35 degrees F.

Update 6/10/11

Fishing pressure was light along the North Shore, and was very light at some stations. The weather was variable; and although winds were strong on some days, there were periods of good weather for lake anglers. Lake water temperatures in the Duluth area ranged from 40 to 50 degrees, while farther up the shore surface temperatures were cooler, from 35 to 37 degrees F.

On the Lower Shore, anglers found good fishing for lake trout and coho salmon in the Duluth area. Lake trout were in the 20 to 25 inch range and were caught at depths of 40 to 120 feet. Coho salmon measured from 15 to 20 inches and were caught while trolling at 10 to 40 feet. A few lake trout were caught out of Knife River. An angler caught a 35 inch lake trout out of McQuade Public Access. The McQuade Public Access is still closed during the week, but open on weekends. The project is scheduled for completion and the access open full time by July 1, 2011.

On the Upper Shore, fishing was fair for lake trout. At Twin Points and Silver Bay, anglers reported good lake trout catches from deep water, from 170 to 200 feet. In the Taconite Harbor area, the best reports came from anglers fishing in areas near shore at 140 to 200 feet. Anglers also reported catching a few lake trout in river mouths at the Cross, Temperance and Poplar rivers. River anglers reported catching a few steelhead in the Poplar and Devil Track rivers.

Update 6/03/11

Poor weather conditions, including high winds, rains and storms kept anglers off the lake for most of the first week of the summer creel survey. Fishing pressure was light along the entire shore, with anglers taking advantage of short breaks in the weather.

On the Lower Shore, anglers caught lake trout that ranged from 24 to 36 inches, jigging off McQuade Public Access. Surface water temperatures remained low, between 36 to 38 degrees F.

On the Upper Shore, anglers from Taconite Harbor found good lake trout fishing for fish in the 2 to 5 pound range. They noted that they had to go out some distance to reach these fish. Anglers at Twin Points and Grand Marais found lake trout between 150 and 200 feet near bottom structure. Surface water temperatures were in the 35 to 37 degree F range.