North Shore Stream Fishing Report

A creel survey has been conducted annually on 17 tributaries along the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior since 1992 and at the McQuade Safe Harbor since 2010. The spring creel survey provides estimates of fishing pressure, catch, and catch rates that aid in the management of the rainbow trout fishery in Lake Superior.

Three creel census clerks conduct angler interviews from April through late-May on the following rivers:
- **Lower Shore**: Lester, McQuade Harbor/Talmadge River, French, Sucker, and Knife
- **Middle Shore**: Stewart, Silver, Gooseberry, Split Rock, Beaver, and Baptism
- **Upper Shore**: Cross, Temperance, Poplar, Cascade, Devil Track, Kadunce, and Brule

If one of these clerks approaches you for an interview, your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Fishing reports are updated on the web on Mondays and Fridays at [http://mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/report.html](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 06/06/14:
The Upper Shore spring creel was extended through this coming weekend. Water levels on all Upper Shore rivers are dropping and rivers are generally in good condition for angling. Water temperatures the past several days ranged from upper 50s to mid-60s. Angling pressure was light and anglers reported some action from steelhead fresh out of the lake, but interviewed anglers did not report landing any fish. Trap totals through 06/05 are 332 steelhead and 22 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 331 Kamloops and 21 steelhead at the French River.

The summer creel survey on Lake Superior has started along the Lower Shore, but has been delayed along the Upper Shore due to the extended cold spring. Lower Shore charter captains and other boaters have begun to catch salmon and a few lake trout just outside the Duluth Harbor. Few anglers have ventured out onto the cold lake further north, and for good reason; fishing has been slow, with just a few fish to pique the curiosity of faithful anglers. Fishing activity is expected to increase on the lake over the weekend as more marina slips are filled and as the water warms. This is the final spring report of the year; a report for both regions of the summer creel on Lake Superior will be posted on Thursdays throughout the summer, starting next week.

Update 06/03/14:
The Upper Shore creel continued over this past weekend. The weekend rain stabilized flows in rivers and cooled water temperatures down to 59-62 degrees. Angling pressure was light but anglers reported fair success, landing 7 steelhead and 1 brook trout. Monday’s rain has greatly increased river levels again however. Trap totals through 06/01 are 307 steelhead and 20 Kamloops at the Knife trap, and 293 Kamloops and 16 steelhead at the French trap. The Lower Shore summer creel has started and will be reported on later this week.

Update 05/30/14
Along the Upper Shore, river levels continue to drop. The larger rivers have maintained moderate flows while the smaller rivers are at low levels and very clear. Water temperatures continue to rise as well and are regularly reaching the mid-60s. Angling pressure was very light the past few days and interviewed anglers caught 2 brook trout. Trap totals through 5/29 are 281 steelhead and 20 Kamloops.
at the Knife River, and 246 Kamloops and 16 steelhead at the French River. The Lower Shore clerk begins the summer creel this weekend and the Upper Shore clerk will start next week, so look for the first summer creel report late next week.

Update 05/28/14:
Over the Memorial Day weekend, rivers along the Lower Shore were at normal flows and water conditions were clear. Water temperatures were in the mid to upper-50s in the mornings and into the 60s in the afternoons. There was very little angling activity and interviewed anglers caught 5 Kamloops, 1 steelhead, and 6 brook trout. Along the Middle Shore, water levels were falling quickly towards normal levels, with water temperatures climbing into the 60s in the afternoons. Angling pressure was extremely light and interviewed anglers caught 4 steelhead and 4 suckers. Along the Upper Shore, flows were dropping in the large rivers while the smaller rivers held normal to low flows. Water temperatures were high 50s in the mornings and up to 64 degrees in the afternoons. There was a fair amount of angling activity on the Upper Shore, and interviewed anglers reported slow fishing and landed 13 steelhead and 6 brook trout. Trap totals through 5/27 are 270 steelhead and 20 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 237 Kamloops and 15 steelhead at the French River. The Lower Shore and Middle Shore creel surveys have ended, and the Lower Shore summer creel will begin later this week.

Update 05/23/14:
During the week along the Lower Shore, water levels in the rivers continued to slowly drop and are higher than normal for this time of year, but very fishable. Water temperatures were low to mid-50s. Angling pressure was light, and angling success was generally slow with periodic reports of better Kamloops activity. Interviewed anglers caught 11 Kamloops and 11 steelhead. Along the Middle Shore, water levels were dropping and most rivers were very accessible, although a few were still running on the high side. Water clarity has increased with the falling water levels. Water temperatures were between 49 and 54 degrees. Fishing pressure was very light and interviewed anglers reported mainly slow fishing with a few good reports mixed in. Interviewed anglers landed 5 steelhead and 3 suckers. Along the Upper Shore, water levels were slowly falling during the week. The larger rivers were maintaining fairly high flows and moderate turbidity while the smaller rivers were more accessible to anglers. Water temperatures climbed into the low 50s. Fishing pressure was light and interviewed anglers reported slow fishing, landing 3 steelhead and 1 brook trout. Trap totals through 5/23 are 248 steelhead and 18 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 225 Kamloops and 15 steelhead at the French River. People continue to have some success with smelt. Webcam images, including current conditions at Park Point, can be found at http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt.

Update 05/19/14:
Over the weekend along the Lower Shore, rivers were holding stable flows with a.m. water temperatures in the mid-40s and p.m. water temperatures in the low 50s. Angling pressure was moderate and interviewed anglers reported slow to fair fishing. Interviewed anglers caught 20 Kamloops, 16 steelhead, 1 coho salmon and 10 suckers. Along the Middle Shore conditions were good, as river levels continued to slowly fall and were flowing at normal to slightly high levels. Water temperatures were 40-43 degrees in the mornings and 49-52 degrees in the afternoons. Fishing pressure was fairly light and interviewed anglers also reported rather slow fishing, landing 10 steelhead and 1 sucker. Along the Upper Shore, water conditions continued to improve. The larger rivers were still running high, but the moderate to smaller rivers were in excellent condition for angling. Morning water temperatures were 40-43 degrees and rose to 46-49 degrees in the afternoons. Angling pressure was light, and interviewed
anglers reported slow fishing, landing 5 steelhead and 5 brook trout. Trap totals through 5/19 are 224 steelhead and 15 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 195 Kamloops and 15 steelhead at the French River. Smelt activity has been good. Webcam images, including current conditions at Park Point, can be found at [http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html](http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html). Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html) for more information on smelt.

Update 05/16/14:
Along the Lower Shore, water levels dropped as the week progressed and conditions for angling have improved. Water temperatures were low 40s early in the mornings and generally 46-48 degrees in the afternoons. Fishing pressure remained low this week but anglers reported improved fishing compared to recent weeks. Interviewed anglers caught 9 steelhead and 5 Kamloops. Along the middle shore, water conditions also improved considerably compared to early in the week. Water levels have receded to very manageable levels, and water temperatures reached 46-48 degrees in the afternoons. Angling pressure was very light and interviewed anglers reported slow fishing despite good conditions, and caught 1 steelhead and 1 northern pike. Along the Upper Shore, water levels were very high early in the week and have come down some, but not to the extent that they have along the rest of the shore. Water temperatures were 41-44 degrees. Angling pressure was extremely light and no fish were reported. Trap totals through 5/15 are 204 steelhead and 14 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 136 Kamloops and 9 steelhead at the French River. River temperatures have risen high enough to trigger smelt runs and some action has been reported along the beach. Webcam images, including current conditions at Park Point, can be found at [http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html](http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html). Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html) for more information on smelt.

Update 05/12/14:
Over the weekend, water levels on Lower Shore rivers were dropping and clarity was improving, but were still running higher than normal. River temperatures ranged from 42 degrees in the mornings up to nearly 50 degrees in the afternoons. Fishing pressure was relatively low, except on Saturday. Interviewed anglers landed 14 Kamloops, 4 steelhead, 4 brook trout and 1 sucker. Along the Middle Shore, rivers were also dropping and conditions improving. Water temperatures were between 44 and 47 degrees. Angling pressure was light, and interviewed anglers reported generally poor fishing, catching 2 steelhead and 2 suckers. Along the Upper Shore, rivers were maintaining high flows, so much so that the larger rivers were difficult for anglers to fish. Water temperatures were 40-44 degrees. Angling pressure was light and interviewed anglers landed 2 steelhead and 1 brook trout. Trap totals through 5/12 are 193 steelhead and 13 Kamloops and the Knife River, and 123 Kamloops and 7 steelhead at the French River. With warmer river temperatures there has been some reported smelt activity. Webcam images, including current conditions at Park Point, can be found at [http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html](http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html). Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html) for more information on smelt.

Update 05/09/14:
During the week, Lower Shore water temperatures were in the upper 30s in the mornings and rose to 42 by late in the afternoons. Thursday’s rain once again brought Lower Shore rivers up and they are now high and turbid. Angling pressure was low to moderate during the week, partially due to strong northeast winds off the lake. Interviewed anglers caught 10 steelhead and 3 Kamloops. Along the Middle Shore, river conditions had been improving until thunderstorms moved through, and now
Middle Shore rivers are running high and dirty. Water temperatures have reached the low 40s in the afternoons. Angling pressure was light and interviewed anglers landed 8 steelhead, 1 Kamloops, and 2 coho salmon. Along the Upper Shore, rivers were running high and turbid due to snowmelt and rains, and have risen even higher with Thursday's storms. Water temperatures were 37-40 degrees. Angling pressure was very light and interviewed anglers reported no fish caught. Trap totals through 05/08 are 132 steelhead and 8 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 109 Kamloops and 6 steelhead at the French River. As for smelt, river temperatures remain on the cool side to trigger smelt runs, and Lake Superior is still packed with ice near Duluth. Webcam images, including current conditions at Park Point, can be found at http://www.goduluthmn.com/duluth-web-cam.html. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt.

Update 05/06/14:
All three creel clerks were out interviewing anglers over the weekend. Along the Lower Shore, water temperatures were mid-30s in the mornings and rising to upper 30s to low 40s by afternoon. Flows were moderate and stable, with some color to the water. Anglers took advantage of the decent weather and fishing pressure was moderate to high. Interviewed anglers landed 15 Kamloops, 12 steelhead, and 1 coho salmon. Along the Middle Shore, rivers were running fairly high and some reaches of the rivers were not very accessible to anglers. Water temperatures were upper 30s to about 44 degrees in the afternoons. Fishing pressure was light and interviewed anglers landed 2 steelhead with other anglers reporting some fish hooked but not landed. Along the Upper Shore, snowmelt continues to keep rivers high and fairly turbid, especially in the afternoons. Some ice remains along the margins of some of the rivers but has diminished greatly, making access to fishable areas much better than last week. Water temperatures were 34-38 degrees. Fishing pressure was light and interviewed anglers landed 1 steelhead. Through 5/5, trap totals are 82 steelhead and 3 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 36 Kamloops and 1 steelhead at the French River. Rivers are still too cool for smelt to run, and ice is still packed along the beaches in Duluth. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt.

Update 5/02/14:
Weather conditions were not conducive for angling this past week. Cold, wet conditions coupled with high winds off the Lake kept fishing pressure light along the Lower Shore. Water temperatures were cold at only 33-35 degrees. Water levels early in the week were dropping but increased with mid-week rain and snow. Fishing pressure was light and only 3 steelhead were reported by interviewed anglers. The strong winds have kept Kamloops angling to a minimum most of the week. Water temperatures remain too cold for smelt to run, and the strong northeast winds have packed ice into the Duluth end of Lake Superior, currently eliminating seining opportunities for smelt along the beaches. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt. Our Middle and Upper Shore clerks will be starting this weekend and their information will be included in Monday’s report.

Update 04/28/14:
Fishing pressure along the Lower Shore was light over the weekend due to poor weather conditions. Water temperatures only reached the mid-30s and flows were high but stable. Anglers reported generally slow fishing, and interviewed anglers caught 4 Kamloops. Stream temperatures remain too cold for smelt to run, and ice along the beaches prevents seining efforts for smelt. Refer to the “Smelt
on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt. An updated report will be posted later in the week.

Update 04/25/14:
All rivers along the North Shore are flowing strong. Unfortunately rain and snow has kept rivers across the shore high and difficult to fish. We started our Lower Shore creel clerk this week. Rivers along the Lower Shore are all running high and dirty. Afternoon water temperatures reached 35 degrees earlier in the week but were only about 32 degrees with Thursday’s cold front. Angling pressure was light with most anglers fishing close to the river mouths due to the high water conditions. Lake Superior continues to have a lot of ice that moves with the winds and has been severely limiting shore anglers targeting Kamloops. Only one steelhead was reported by interviewed anglers. Smelt will not run until river temperatures climb into the upper 40s. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt. A report will be posted on Monday.

Update 04/18/14:
Rivers along the North Shore are flowing, but deep snow in the river valleys and shelf ice along the margins of the rivers makes access to many rivers very difficult and dangerous. Water temperatures remain very cold, only in the low 30s. Warmer air temperatures are forecasted for early next week, which should help melt the remaining ice. Shore angling for Kamloops remains difficult due to the ice in Lake Superior getting pushed around by the winds, often eliminating any open water for fishing. Smelt will not run until the rivers thaw and water temperatures climb into the upper 40s. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt. An updated report will be posted as conditions change.

Update 04/11/14:
Rivers along the North Shore are really starting to flow, but there is still significant ice in most of them. As the ice breaks up large pieces move downstream, creating dangerous conditions, and no anglers have been observed attempting to fish the rivers yet. Shore angling for Kamloops has been erratic due to ice floes getting blown around the lake by the winds, which causes conditions to change frequently. Smelt will not run until the rivers thaw and water temperatures climb into the upper 40s. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt. An updated report will be posted as conditions change.

Update 03/26/14:
All streams along the North Shore are still frozen and the extended forecast is not calling for a significant increase in daytime temperatures, so stream fishing is still a ways off. Kamloops anglers are fishing open water near the French River when conditions permit. Conditions can change frequently due to ice floes floating around the lake. Smelt will not run until the streams thaw and stream temperatures climb into the upper 40s. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html for more information on smelt. An updated report will be posted once conditions change.