



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 our website on Mondays and Fridays at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/management.html> or by calling our office at 218-525-0853 and selecting 1 for the updated fishing report.

Update 04/01/15:

All streams along the North Shore remain mostly frozen with little opportunity to attempt angling. However, shore anglers are fishing Lake Superior near river mouths with some success for Kamloops and Coho Salmon. It is too cold for smelt activity yet. 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 when conditions change.

Update 04/10/15:

Streams along the North Shore have started to open up, but still have ice coverage in many areas which severely limits angling opportunity. Fortunately, the current forecast is calling for warmer weather which will help reduce ice coverage. Water levels in all rivers are extremely low and water temperatures are 33 degrees. Anglers have been limited to shore fishing with some Kamloops caught. It is too cold for smelt activity yet. 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 on Monday.

Update 04/13/15:

Some much needed rain fell Sunday night which helped reduce the amount of ice in North Shore rivers and provided at least some relief from the extremely low water levels. Rivers along the lower shore are opening up enough for angling, but rivers near Grand Marais likely need a little more time. All three creel clerks will be out this week so more details will be included in Friday's report. Both the Knife and French River traps are operational. Trap totals through 4/13 include no fish captured at the Knife River and 189 Kamloops and 15 steelhead at the French River. Rivers remain too cold for smelt activity. 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 04/17/15:

Streams along the lower shore remain low and clear. Water temperatures have been in the mid to upper 30s in the mornings and reaching low 40s by the afternoons. Fishing pressure has been light to moderate. Interviewed anglers have done well this first week, landing 88 steelhead, 23 Kamloops, and 4 coho salmon. Along the middle shore, rivers are at low to moderate flows with water temperatures reaching the low to mid-40s in the afternoons. Fishing pressure has been light with few fish caught. Interviewed anglers reported catching 2 steelhead and 1 Kamloops. Along the upper shore, conditions have improved enough within the past few days to allow anglers to begin fishing the rivers near Grand Marais. The medium to large rivers are maintaining mostly moderate flows with moderate turbidity, but the smaller rivers have low flows and some still have some ice coverage. Afternoon water temperatures have ranged from 37-39 degrees. Angling pressure has been light and interviewed anglers have only reported catching one brook trout. Trap totals through April 17th are 158 steelhead and zero Kamloops at the Knife River, and 462 Kamloops and 56 steelhead at the French River. An updated report will be posted on Monday.

Update 04/20/15:

Along the lower shore, 70+ degree air temperatures on Friday caused rivers to warm into the upper 40s, but temps began dropping on Sunday as a cold front moved in and an inch of rain fell on the North Shore. Lower shore rivers began rising to moderate flows on Sunday and turbidity increased. Northeast winds prevented anglers from shore fishing most of the weekend. Pressure was moderate and fishing was reported as fair, although interviewed anglers only reported catching 8 steelhead, 1 Kamloops, and 1 brook trout. Along the middle shore, water temperatures were in the 40s on Saturday but dropped into the upper 30s as the cold front and rain moved in on Sunday. Rivers also began to rise and become turbid on Sunday. Fishing pressure was light, but anglers had good success on Saturday but reported a tougher bite on Sunday with the cooler water. Interviewed anglers caught 13 steelhead, 2 Kamloops, and 2 brook trout. Along the upper shore, water temperatures reached 40-44 degrees by Saturday afternoon. Sunday's rain and cold weather dropped water temperatures to 36-37 degrees and rivers rose and became turbid. Fishing pressure was fairly light and anglers reported slow fishing, with interviewed anglers landing 1 steelhead and 1 brook trout. Trap totals through April 20th include 413 steelhead and 3 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 507 Kamloops and 66 steelhead at the French River. Some smelt activity has been reported but has been spotty. An updated report will be posted on Friday.

Update 4/24/15:

Along the lower shore, water temperatures dropped to the mid-30's due to cold weather conditions. Water levels dropped and water clarity has improved. Angler effort and catch was lower than previous weeks likely due to snow and gusty northwest winds. Angler pressure was relatively light and interviewed anglers caught 14 steelhead, 15 Kamloops and 1 Coho salmon. Along the middle shore, water temperatures were in the mid-30's until Thursday afternoon when water temperatures climbed into the low-40's. Water levels have dropped throughout the week. Interviewed anglers have reported progressively better fishing throughout the week and reported a catch of 16 steelhead, 2 Kamloops and 2 Brook Trout. Fishing pressure was relatively light. Along the upper shore, tributaries were at moderate to high levels with turbid conditions following rainfall that exceeded one inch over the weekend. Since then, water levels have dropped and water clarity has improved. Cool weather with cold nights held water temperatures in the mid-30's and reached 40 degrees on Thursday afternoon. Anglers reported good fishing for steelhead at lower sections of tributaries and near river mouths.

Angler pressure was light and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 4 steelhead and 3 Brook Trout. Trap totals through April 23rd include 446 steelhead and 3 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 543 Kamloops and 75 steelhead at the French River. Smelt activity has been slow. 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 on Monday.

Update 4/27/15:

Along the lower shore, water temperatures increased slightly over the weekend. Most rivers remain in the mid-30's and low-40's. Water levels are low and clear making fish skittish and harder to catch. Angler pressure increased over the weekend, and reported catch was similar to the previous week. Interviewed anglers reported a catch of 14 steelhead, 12 Kamloops, 3 Cisco and 1 White Sucker. Along the middle shore, water temperatures were in the mid-30's until Sunday afternoon when water temperatures climbed into the low-40's. Water levels remained low and clear. Fishing pressure increased over the weekend and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 19 steelhead, 4 Kamloops and 1 Brook Trout. Anglers reported better fishing in early mornings at the mid- and lower river sections. Along the upper shore, larger tributaries have maintained moderate water levels while smaller tributaries have been dropping quickly and are reaching low levels. The smallest tributaries continue to hold areas of heavy winter ice. Water temperatures were in the mid-30's in the morning and reached 44 degrees in late-afternoon. Anglers reported slow fishing during mid-day, likely attributed to reduced water levels and clear water, and better success in morning and late-evening hours. Angler pressure was light to moderate and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 19 steelhead, 1 Kamloops and 2 Brook Trout. Trap totals through April 27th include 514 steelhead and 5 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 626 Kamloops and 91 steelhead at the French River. Smelt activity has increased at Minnesota Point and Wisconsin Point, and a few parties reported good catch over the weekend. No smelting activity has been reported for North Shore tributaries. An updated report will be posted on Friday.

Update 5/1/15:

Along the lower shore, most streams remained low and clear. Water temperatures were in the mid- to upper-40's and reached the low- to mid-50's in the afternoons. Fishing pressure was low to moderate. Anglers reported seeing many fish, but clear water and low flows continue to make them wary and difficult to catch. Interviewed anglers landed 3 steelhead, 7 Kamloops, 5 Coho salmon and 1 White sucker. Along the middle shore, streams were low and clear with moderate flows. Water temperatures ranged from 35 to 49 degrees. Fishing pressure was low to moderate and interviewed anglers reported 7 steelhead, 4 Kamloops, 2 Brook Trout and 1 Coho salmon. Along the upper shore, large tributaries continued to hold moderate flows while small tributaries had low flows. Water temperatures were in the low 40's in the mornings and reached the low 50's in the afternoons. Angling pressure was low and interviewed anglers reported catching 5 steelhead and 6 Brook Trout. Anglers are now catching suckers from most large tributaries. Trap totals through May 1st are 597 steelhead and 7 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 675 Kamloops and 101 steelhead at the French River. Smelt activity was good this week with many being caught at Minnesota Point and Wisconsin Point, and a few reports of smelt congregating near the mouths of lower North Shore streams. An updated report will be posted on Monday.

Update 5/4/15:

Streams remained low and clear along the lower shore over the weekend. Water temperatures were in the mid- to upper-40's and peaked the mid-50's in the afternoons. Fishing pressure was moderate and

interviewed anglers landed 42 steelhead, 4 Kamloops and 1 White sucker. Along the middle shore, streams remained low and clear, and flows decreased over the weekend. Water temperatures ranged from mid-40 to low-50 degree range. Fishing pressure was moderate and interviewed anglers reported 24 steelhead and 3 Brook Trout. Along the upper shore, tributaries continued to experience dropping flows with dry conditions over the weekend. Large tributaries maintained moderate flows and smaller tributaries had low flows. Water temperatures were in the upper-40 to the mid-50 degree range. Angling pressure was moderate and interviewed anglers reported catching 5 steelhead and 1 Brook Trout. Trap totals through May 4th are 619 steelhead and 9 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 704 Kamloops and 103 steelhead at the French River. Heavy smelt activity continued at Minnesota Point and Wisconsin Point over the weekend, and smelt were found congregating near the mouths of a few lower North Shore streams. An updated report will be posted on Friday.

Update 05/08/15:

Along the lower shore, most streams remained low and clear until much needed rains came on Thursday and Friday that caused water levels and turbidity to increase. Water temperatures ranged from the high-40's in the mornings to high-50's in the afternoons and evenings. Angler pressure and catch was low, and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 3 steelhead, 4 Kamloops and 1 Coho salmon. Many fish were observed actively spawning in lower shore tributaries. Along the middle shore, streams remained low and clear with moderate to low flows. Water temperatures ranged from the mid-40's to mid-50's. Fishing pressure was low and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 2 steelhead. Along the upper shore, water levels and turbidity on most tributaries remained low. Water temperatures ranged from 48 degrees in the mornings to 55 degrees in the afternoons. Anglers reported good numbers of steelhead in most tributaries with fresh, silver fish arriving in recent days. Anglers observed actively spawning fish in many tributaries and some trying to jump barrier falls. Angler pressure was light and anglers reported exciting conditions with clear water and mostly undisturbed, active fish. Anglers reported catching 5 steelhead and 1 Brook Trout. Trap totals through May 8th are 658 steelhead and 9 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 719 Kamloops and 108 steelhead at the French River. Smelting activity has been low over the last week and it appears beyond the peak of the smelt run for 2015. An updated report will be posted on Monday.

Update 05/11/15:

Along the lower shore, cold weather and rain elevated water levels and lowered water temperatures in most tributaries over the weekend. Water temperatures were in the upper-30 to the mid-40 degree range. Angler pressure and catch was low and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 1 steelhead, 3 Kamloops, 2 Coho salmon and 1 White sucker. Along the middle shore, streams remained clear over the weekend with low, stable flows. Water temperatures ranged from 44 to 56 degrees. Fishing pressure was low to moderate and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 14 steelhead and 3 Kamloops. Along the upper shore, water levels and turbidity increased on many tributaries after over one inch of rain on May 7, and another 1.5 inches on May 10. Larger tributaries had moderate flows while smaller tributaries had low to moderate flows. Water temperatures ranged from 42 to 53 degrees. Anglers reported seeing good numbers of steelhead in most tributaries, and that fish were more visible in smaller tributaries. Angler pressure was light and interviewed anglers reported a catch of 4 steelhead. Trap totals through May 11th are 674 steelhead and 10 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 731 Kamloops and 110 steelhead at the French River. The smelt run has diminished for 2015. Many online reports indicated that the 2015 smelt return was banner with consistent catch extending most of April and early-May. An updated report will be posted on Monday, May 18.

05/18/15:

Rivers along the Lower Shore were at normal flows and water conditions were relatively clear. Water temperatures were in the upper-40s in the mornings and into the 50s in the afternoons. There was moderate angling activity and interviewed anglers caught 13 steelhead, 4 Kamloops, 1 Longnose sucker, and 1 White sucker. Along the Middle Shore, water levels were close to normal with water temperatures ranging from 42 to 50 degrees. Angling pressure was moderate and interviewed anglers caught 4 steelhead. Upper shore tributaries had moderate to strong flows with recent accumulating rains. Water temperatures have been consistently above 50 degrees in most tributaries. Angling activity was light to moderate and interviewed anglers reported 4 steelhead and 1 Kamloops. Trap totals through 5/18 are 708 steelhead and 13 Kamloops at the Knife River, and 774 Kamloops and 117 steelhead at the French River. The spring creel survey will end this week and the summer creel survey will begin next week.