



## **North Shore Weekly Fishing Report**

An early-spring “Kamloops” creel survey has been implemented in 2013, 2015 and 2016. This survey documents angling pressure, catch, and harvest of Kamloops Rainbow Trout in lower shore (near Duluth) during the fishing period prior to when the rivers are free of ice. The annual spring 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. Both spring creel surveys provide estimates of fishing pressure, catch, and catch rates that aid in the management of the Rainbow Trout fishery in Minnesota waters of Lake Superior. The annual spring creel survey typically begins when rivers are free of ice and when creel clerks start to observe more anglers fishing in tributaries. Three creel census clerks conduct angler interviews from March through late-May on the following rivers:

- Lower Shore: Lester, McQuade Harbor/Talmadge River, French, Sucker, and Knife rivers
- Middle Shore: Stewart, Silver, Gooseberry, Split Rock, Beaver, and Baptism rivers
- Upper Shore: Cross, Temperance, Poplar, Cascade, Devil Track, Kadunce, and Brule rivers

Your input and cooperation is greatly appreciated if a creel clerk approaches you for an interview. 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 the North Shore Weekly Fishing Report Hotline at 218-302-3293.

## **Weekly Fishing Report Update**

### **May 20-22, 2016**

**Lower shore:** The lower shore spring creel survey ended on May 16, 2016.

**Middle shore:** Water temperatures were in the upper-50 to low-60° F range. Water levels and turbidity were normal to low in most rivers. Angling pressure was light and reported catch was 1 steelhead and 1 sucker. The middle shore creel ended on May 22, 2016.

**Upper shore:** Water temperatures were in the upper-50 to low-60 ° F range. Most tributaries have experienced a noticeable drop in water levels over the weekend, and water levels and flow was low in small tributaries and moderate in larger tributaries. Angling pressure was light and reported catch was 2 steelhead. The upper shore creel survey ended on May 23, 2016.

### **May 13-15, 2016**

**Lower shore:** Water temperatures were in the mid- to upper-40° F range. Water levels and turbidity have remained low. Angling pressure was low and reported catch was 5 steelhead, 2 Kamloops, 1 Brook trout, 1 Round Whitefish, and 1 Creek Chub.

**Middle shore:** Water temperatures were in the upper-40° F range. Water levels and turbidity continued to drop and were normal to low in most rivers. Angling pressure was light and reported catch was 15 Brook Trout and 5 steelhead.

**Upper shore:** Water temperatures remained in the mid- to upper-40° F range. Large tributaries hold moderate flow conditions and clear water (low turbidity), while small tributaries are near low flow conditions. Angling pressure was low and reported catch was 1 steelhead and 5 Brook Trout.

**Smelt:** Smelting activity has diminished near Duluth and there have been very few reports for the middle or upper shore. For more information on smelt please refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html>.

### May 7-8, 2016

**Lower shore:** Record high air temperatures on Friday, May 6 increased water temperatures into the upper-50 to low-60° F range, but water temperatures dropped back into the low-50's over the weekend. Water levels have continually dropped and turbidity has remained low. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 9 steelhead, 6 Kamloops, 2 Coho salmon, 1 Northern Pike and 8 Chubs/suckers.

**Middle shore:** Water temperatures ranged from the mid- to upper-50° F range. Water levels and turbidity have steadily decreased and are normal to low in most rivers. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 27 steelhead, 4 Brook Trout, 1 Brown Trout and 1 Kamloops.

**Upper shore:** Water temperatures remained in the mid- to upper-40° F range. Upper shore tributaries had steadily dropping flows but continued to maintain moderate levels despite continued dry weather conditions. Large tributaries had good flow conditions and water clarity, while small tributaries are near low flow conditions. Angling pressure was light to moderate and reported catch was 19 steelhead, 7 Brook Trout and 1 Kamloops.

**Smelt:** It appears to be close to the end of the 2016 smelt season near Duluth and smelt catch has diminished at Minnesota Point. There have been no smelt reports for the middle or upper shore. For a list of tributaries where smelting is allowed please refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html>.

### May 2-6, 2016

**Lower shore:** Water temperatures ranged from mid-40° F in the to the upper-50's in the afternoons. Water levels and turbidity remain low. Anglers have started to report seeing suckers in many lower shore rivers. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 11 steelhead, 7 Kamloops, 1 White suckers and 1 Brook Trout.

**Middle shore:** Water temperatures ranged from the mid-40 to mid-50° F range. Water levels and turbidity have steadily decreased and are normal to low in most rivers. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 35 steelhead, 2 Brook Trout and 4 White suckers. Anglers started to report seeing suckers in some middle shore tributaries.

**Upper shore:** Water temperatures were in the mid- to upper-40° F range, and reached 50° F in the afternoons. Large tributaries provided good flow conditions and good water clarity, and flow in small tributaries have steadily dropped. Angling pressure was low and reported catch was 6 steelhead and 3 Brook Trout.

**Smelt:** The smelt run is slowing down at Minnesota Point, but some are still being caught at mouth of some tributaries near Duluth. There have been very few smelt reports for the middle or upper shore. For a list of tributaries where smelting is allowed please refer to the

“Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html>.

#### **April 29-May 1, 2016**

**Lower shore:** Water temperatures and remained in the mid-40° F range with some tributaries reaching the low-50’s in the afternoons. Water levels and turbidity remain low. Angling pressure was high and reported catch was 22 steelhead, 20 Kamloops, 7 White suckers and 2 Brook Trout.

**Middle shore:** Water temperatures have been rising and were in the low- to mid-40° F range. Water levels are around normal (base flow) and turbidity has decreased. Angling pressure was high and reported catch was 57 steelhead, 18 Brook Trout and 6 Kamloops.

**Upper shore:** Water temperatures were in the mid- to upper-40° F range. Upper shore tributaries continue to experience steadily dropping flows and rising water temperatures. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 15 steelhead and 3 Brook Trout.

**Smelt:** Adequate numbers of smelt are being caught at Minnesota Point and at the mouth of some tributaries. For a list of tributaries where smelting is allowed please refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html>.

#### **April 25-28, 2016**

**Lower shore:** Water temperatures and remained in the low- to mid-40° F range. Water levels and turbidity have decreased recent days. Sustained northeast winds have limited shore angling opportunities in Lake Superior throughout this creel period. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 26 steelhead, 7 Kamloops, and 3 White suckers.

**Middle shore:** Water temperatures have remained in the low-40° F range and water levels and turbidity have decreased. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 25 steelhead and 1 Walleye.

**Upper shore:** Water temperatures have increased to the mid- to upper-40° F range, water levels are dropping and turbidity has improved in most tributaries. The creel clerk had observed steelhead leaping at barrier falls in several tributaries. Angling pressure was low and reported catch was 2 steelhead.

**Smelt:** Northeast winds have limited smelt activity at Minnesota Point and near mouths of tributaries near Duluth throughout this creel period. However, some that have battled the waves have caught adequate numbers of smelt. For a list of tributaries where smelting is allowed please refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html>.

#### **April 23-24, 2016**

**Lower shore:** Average water temperatures were 41° F and ranged from 40-45° F. Rain has increased water levels and turbidity in recent days, and most rivers are currently flowing high and very turbid. Angling pressure was low and reported catch was 6 steelhead, 6 Kamloops, and 1 White sucker.

**Middle shore:** Water temperatures have dropped slightly over the weekend to near 40° F. Water levels and turbidity are on the rise due to intermittent rain. Angling pressure was high and reported catch was 28 steelhead, 3 Kamloops and 3 Brook Trout.

**Upper shore:** Water temperatures have remained cold and dropped slightly over the weekend to below 40° F. Water levels were moderate in smaller tributaries and high in large tributaries. Turbidity has improved in recent days and water clarity was good. Angling pressure was light to moderate, and reported catch was 3 steelhead.

**Smelt:** Smelt activity was high over the weekend at Minnesota Point and some have started to smelt near mouths of tributaries near Duluth. Reports were that many smelt were caught even though lake conditions were not ideal for dip netting or seining (3 foot waves and cold weather). For a list of tributaries where smelting is allowed please refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html>.

#### **April 18-22, 2016**

**Lower shore:** average water temperatures were 43° F and ranged from 38-50° F. Water levels and turbidity have decreased in recent days. Anglers have seen steelhead actively spawning and ascending falls in many lower shore rivers. Angling pressure was high and reported catch was 36 steelhead, 20 Kamloops, 1 Coho salmon, and 3 White suckers.

**Middle shore:** average water temperatures were 41°F and ranged from 38-46° F. Water levels have remained high and turbidity has increased due to snowmelt and intermittent rain in recent days. Angling pressure was moderate and reported catch was 27 steelhead.

**Upper shore:** water temperatures have warmed slightly in recent days, but still remained between below 40° F. Water levels have remained high and continue to be largely influenced by melting snow. Angling pressure was light and reported catch was 7 steelhead and 2 Kamloops. Anglers also reported catch of suckers on several tributaries.

**Smelt:** there has been some smelt activity at Minnesota Point and at mouths of tributaries near Duluth. Please refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html> for more information on where smelting in tributaries is allowed.

#### **April 15-17, 2016**

**Lower shore:** average daily water temperatures were 44° F and ranged from 37-48° F. Water levels and turbidity have increased in recent days. Angling pressure was high and reported catch was 78 steelhead, 35 Kamloops, 1 Brown Trout, and 4 White suckers.

**Middle shore:** average daily water temperatures were 39°F and ranged from 37-42° F. Water levels have been rising and turbidity has increased in recent days. Angling pressure was high and reported catch was 3 steelhead. Many anglers reported seeing fish surfacing with a number of reported ‘hook-ups.’

**Upper shore:** water temperatures have warmed slightly in recent days, but still remained between 35-37° F. Water levels remain near high levels and quite turbid, particularly in larger tributaries. Angling pressure was light to moderate, and reported catch was 5 steelhead.

**Smelt:** there has been some smelt activity at Minnesota Point in the last few days but most reports indicate little to no catch. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html> for more information.



### **April 11-15, 2016**

Lower Shore: Mid-day water temperatures were in the low 40° F range at all lower shore rivers. Water levels, turbidity and temperatures have increased and are ideal conditions for migratory fish. Angling pressure has increased substantially over the last few days. A total of 67 anglers were interviewed between April 11-14, and reported catch was 18 Kamloops and 10 steelhead.

Middle Shore: Water temperatures have climbed into the mid- to upper-30°F range. Water levels have been rising and turbidity has increased slightly. Angling pressure was moderate. A total of 46 anglers were interviewed between April 11-15, and reported catch was 19 steelhead, 4 Brook Trout and 1 White sucker.

Upper Shore: Upper shore tributaries continue to hold ice along river banks. Water temperatures are on the rise and water levels are near high levels and quite turbid.

Smelt: There have been no reports of smelt activity at Minnesota Point. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html> for more information on smelt.

Fish Traps: As of April 15, total catch at the Knife River Adult Trap is 531 steelhead and 2 Kamloops. Totals at the French River are 1,108 Kamloops and 103 steelhead.

### **April 8-10, 2016**

Lower Shore: Cold weather over the weekend kept water temperatures in the low 30° F range at all lower shore rivers. Water levels and turbidity remain low with some ice forming in the mornings. A total of 125 anglers were interviewed between April 8-10, and reported catch was 13 steelhead and 6 Kamloops.

Middle Shore: Water temperatures have remained in the low 30°F range and water levels have remained low and slightly turbid. Consistent freezing overnight created slush chunks and difficult fishing conditions in many streams over the weekend. A total of 10 anglers were interviewed between April 8-10, and reported catch was 2 Brook Trout.

Upper Shore: Upper shore tributaries continue to present difficult conditions for anglers with ice holding tight to river banks, and ice and slush blocking some fishing areas. Water temps in tributaries continue to be very cold with no water temps recorded over 33°F. While water levels in tributaries have dropped slightly, levels continue to run with strong moderate flows. A total of 9 anglers were interviewed between April 8-10, and reported catch was 1 steelhead and 1 Brook Trout.

Smelt: There have been no reports of smelt activity at Minnesota Point. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html> for more information on smelt.

Fish Traps: As of April 11, total catch at the Knife River Adult Trap is 145 steelhead and 1 Kamloops. Totals at the French River are 904 Kamloops and 84 steelhead.

### **April 1-4, 2016**

Lower Shore: Cold weather, wind and snow over the weekend has lowered river water temperatures to the low- 30° F range. Water levels and turbidity have decreased in recent days. Ice formed in the slowest parts of the rivers on 4/2 and 4/3, and snowfall on 4/2 resulted in slush flowing down the rivers, which made fishing difficult early in the morning.

A total of 121 anglers were interviewed between April 1-3, and reported catch was 18 steelhead, 15 Kamloops, 2 Brook Trout, and 1 Coho salmon.

Middle Shore: The middle shore creel survey began on March 31. Water temperatures have remained in the low 30°F range, and water levels have remained low and slightly turbid with some ice still present. A total of 33 anglers were interviewed between March 31 and April 4, and reported catch was 7 steelhead.

Upper Shore: Upper shore tributaries continue to hold heavy ice especially in shaded areas and deeper ravines. Some tributaries remain particularly difficult where heavy ice remains and all tributaries hold enough ice on both the water and the trails that anglers should be cautious of hazards involved. A few tributaries are quite fishable well into areas reaching barriers and all tributaries are accessible in their lowest reaches and where tributaries enter the lake. All tributaries are very cold with near-freezing water temperatures and have moderately strong flows and fairly turbid water. Angler pressure was recorded as mostly light over the cold weekend and especially so on Sunday when 4-5 inches of snow accumulated. A total of 9 anglers were interviewed between April 1-3, and reported catch was 1 Kamloops.

Smelt: There have been no reports of smelt activity at Minnesota Point. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html> for more information on smelt.

Fish Traps: As of April 5, total catch at the Knife River Adult Trap is 143 steelhead and 1 Kamloops. The French River Adult Trap was opened on April 5 and seining operations will start on April 6.

### **March 29-31, 2016**

The annual spring creel survey has now started and three creel clerks will be interviewing anglers at the major rivers along the North Shore of Lake Superior for the rest of the spring fishing season. Many anglers have been fishing streams along the lower and middle shore (from Duluth to Silver Bay), and less have started to fish the upper shore rivers. In lower shore rivers (Lester to Knife rivers), water levels remain average and slightly turbid. Water temperatures ranged from 33 in the mornings to 38 in the afternoons. A total of 79 anglers were interviewed at creel stations in the lower shore between March 29-30, and reported catch was 16 Kamloops, 14 steelhead, and 1 Coho salmon. In the middle shore, water levels have remained slightly higher than average and turbid with some ice still present. Water temperatures have remained in the low 30's. Fifteen anglers were interviewed on March 31. No fish were reported caught, but many anglers reported seeing and hooking up with fish in some rivers. Anglers can find fair opportunity to fish most tributaries in the upper shore. Tributaries are shedding their ice steadily with lower sections quite fishable. Some rivers are very fishable and completely ice free, while deep canyon tributaries and other upstream sections are pretty much inaccessible with heavy ice holding in the rivers and treacherous icy trails. Water levels are high and turbid with cool water temperatures remaining in the low 30's. There have been no reports of smelt activity at Minnesota Point. Refer to the “Smelt on the North Shore” fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html> for more information on smelt.

### **March 26-27, 2016**

The annual spring creel survey has now started in the lower shore and the creel clerk will be interviewing anglers at the major rivers in the lower shore. Many anglers are now fishing streams along the lower and middle shore (from Duluth to Silver Bay). Upper shore rivers (near Grand Marias) still hold ice and are only fishable near river mouths. In the lower shore, river levels are generally good for fishing and fresh snowmelt has added some turbidity to lower shore rivers. Water temperatures in rivers have ranged from 33 in the morning to 34 in the afternoon. A total of 65 anglers were interviewed at creel stations in the lower shore between March 26-27, and reported catch was 12 steelhead, 5 Kamloops, 2 Brook Trout, and 1 Brown Trout. There have been no reports of smelt activity at Minnesota Point. Refer to the "Smelt on the North Shore" fact sheet on the Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/smelt.html> for more information on smelt.

### **March 21-24, 2016**

Many anglers are fishing streams along the lower and middle shore (from Duluth to Two Harbors). Water temperatures in rivers are around 31°F in the morning, and rise to around 35°F in the afternoons. River levels are conducive for fishing and water clarity has improved in recent days. A few steelhead and Kamloops have been caught in lower shore rivers, typically closer to the lake and often later in the day when some (slightly) warmer meltwater makes its way down the river. Warmer temperatures and some precipitation are predicted for the next few days which should bring more fish into the rivers. A total of 53 anglers were interviewed at creel stations in the lower shore between March 21-24, and reported catch was 3 Kamloops and 1 steelhead. There have been no reports of smelt activity at Minnesota Point. 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.

### **March 17-20, 2016**

Many streams along the North Shore are open and now allow angling opportunities. Water levels (flow) in lower shore rivers are average or above-average, and water temperatures remain in the low 30's. Anglers are starting to see fish in tributaries and some reported catch of Steelhead and Kamloops. A total of 61 anglers were interviewed at creel stations in the lower shore between March 18-20, and reported catch was 10 Kamloops and 2 Steelhead. There have been no reports of smelt activity at Minnesota Point. 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.

### **March 10-16, 2016**

The 2016 early-spring "Kamloops" creel survey began on March 10, and one creel clerk started interviewing anglers at lower shore rivers (near Duluth). Many North Shore rivers have water flowing over ice and are not yet fishable. However, warm air temperatures and rain has significantly increased stream flows in recent days. Water temperatures in rivers have remained around 32°F. Shore anglers are fishing Lake Superior near river mouths with some success for Kamloops and Coho Salmon. A total of 124 anglers were interviewed between March 10 – 16, and reported catch was 12 Kamloops and 5 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.