

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. Clerks follow pre-determined schedules to ensure that their data accurately represents all anglers' effort and catch on Lake Superior.

Fishing reports are updated on Thursdays at the Minnesota DNR's web page for the Lake Superior fisheries office. The web address is at <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior/2021-su-creel.pdf> . You may also call our office at 218-302-3293 and selecting 1 for the updated fishing report.

9/23/2021

Lower Shore— Duluth to Two Harbors:

Westerly winds began pushing the warmer water offshore, dropping the nearshore surface temps as low as the mid-50s, though the temperature was warmer at about 60 degrees near Duluth. Other than charter boats, relatively few anglers are launching from the marinas and accesses near Duluth. Charter anglers did fairly well on Lake Trout or Siscowet and some smaller, 13-15 inch, Chinook Salmon. The Lakers were 19-23 inches on average near Duluth. Farther north, and especially around Agate Bay, anglers did well, catching up to 2 fish per angler per trip. Much of the effort was from those who jigged deep out of Agate Bay. The Lake Trout continue to move toward spawning grounds and are in 70-120 feet of water. The Lakers were bigger near Two Harbors, averaging 21-25 inches with more fish in the 25-30 inch range and a couple of fish in the 32-34 inch range that were released. Some of the fish had loose eggs. A few small, 10-12 inch, Coho Salmon were caught and released. Pink/purple and glow-in-the-dark were good spoon colors near Duluth, and white and glow-in-the-dark worked well for jigging. Pink spoons also picked up a few fish. So overall, I would say that many anglers in the lower shore areas had good trips this past week.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Upper shore water temperatures remained warm this past week, with surface temps in the upper 50s to 60 degrees near Twin Points and Silver Bay and only a degree or two cooler further up the shore. The warm water runs deep in the nearshore areas. Angler pressure is dropping off sharply from all stations as hunting seasons open up and anglers have experienced slow action this last week, prompting many anglers to hang up their rods for the season. Anglers from all stations have reported that fishing has been quite slow. Lake trout have become difficult to catch and although anglers are seeing many fish marks in deep nearshore waters, very few of these fish are chasing anglers' offerings.

Chinooks Salmon catches were low from Taconite Harbor to Grand Marais and the fish are widely scattered. Pink salmon seem to have left the lake and are present in good numbers in most large tributaries along the mid and upper shore. While a fair amount of rain has fallen in recent days, tributary levels continue to be quite low. Water temps in tributaries has averaged in the low 60s. The shoreline water temperatures are still too warm and shore-casting anglers caught few fish as most Lake Trout stay in deeper water.

As a reminder, the Lake Trout season for 2021 closes to boats for most of the Minnesota waters on October 3 and the season re-opens on December 1. Bad weather is often a consideration this late in the season, so be aware of the weather as usual on the big lake.

9/16/2021

Lower Shore— Duluth to Two Harbors:

Fishing pressure and success were both higher earlier in the week, before Northeast winds kicked in Monday. Surface temps stayed in the low to mid-60s, and the warm layer was 75-90 feet deep, pushing fish deep again. Duluth area pressure and success were primarily from charter boats again, and most of the fish were the lean Lake Trout variety. The Lake Trout averaged 19-23 inches with a couple fish around 28-30 inches. Salmon catch was low, with a few keeper Chinook Salmon running 23-25 inches long and a few released fish running 10-13 inches. Coho Salmon were 20-22 inches long and Pink Salmon were 15-16 inches long. Most of the salmon were caught early in the week. The Pink Salmon are beginning to run into the rivers to spawn. For Lake Trout, trolling on the bottom in 85 to 100 feet of water picked up some fish, with spoons being more popular this week. Chrome and purple worked well. Pink/purple spoons also took some fish for trollers. The Lake Trout appear to have begun moving slowly toward spawning reefs. Fishing in the lower end of the St. Louis Estuary was minimal.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Anglers experienced some turbulent weather this past week with quickly rising winds causing hazardous lake conditions for smaller boats. While water surface temps remain warm along the mid and upper shore, average temps are dropping and now reside in the mid 50 degree range on the upper shore and nearer to 60 degrees in mid shore waters. Water surface temps remain at near 60 degrees further off shore and reports are that this warm water continues to extend deeply into the water column. This warm water continues to keep fish, both trout and salmon, holding in deep water and anglers continue to do better concentrating lures below the 50 foot down and at times much deeper. Angler pressure continues to drop off as the season nears its end and weather conditions worsen as is usual at this time of the year. On average, folks caught about 1 1/3 fish per angler per trip.

While Lake Trout are scattered and mostly holding deep, more larger fish continue to be caught as they arrive in better concentrations in more near shore areas. Lake Trout are often reported as suspended over deep water. Some very large Lake Trout have been caught at all stations and fish exceeding 20 pounds were caught over this past week.

Salmon numbers have been dropping off sharply during this past week as adult salmon now move towards tributaries to spawn. As of 9-15, Pink Salmon have begun to enter upper shore tributaries though many mid and small size rivers barely hold enough flow for salmon to be able to enter. With good numbers of Pink Salmon this past summer, good runs are expected but so far only light numbers have been observed. Tributaries have been charged with some good rain recently and while they are still in low water conditions, they are much improved.

Good numbers of steelhead have been reported by lake anglers and especially from Grand Marais where steelhead in the 25 to 27 inch range were reported.

9/9/2021

Lower Shore— Duluth to Two Harbors:

Good weather most days allowed people to enjoy the holiday weekend on the lake and fishing effort was fairly high. Surface temps stayed in the low to mid-60s, and the warm layer was 90-100 feet deep, so there was little surface fishing this week. Catch was decent too, at over 1 Lake Trout per angler per trip, however few other salmon or trout were caught. Duluth area pressure and success was primarily from charter boats. In the McQuade area fishing success was very low, however effort and success in the Two Harbors area was higher than elsewhere on the lower north shore. In the Duluth area, Lake Trout averaged 19-23 inches with a couple fish around 30 inches. A fairly high proportion of the fish were the fat siscowet variety. The Chinook Salmon were about 23-25 inches long, and the Pink Salmon were all 15-16 inches. Pink Salmon will probably move, or are already moving, into the streams this next week. A few bigger Walleye and Brown Trout were caught, both about 25 inches long. From McQuade and especially Two Harbors, the Lake Trout averaged 17-24 inches with some as large as 34 inches (released). The Coho Salmon reported this week were all released as they were around 10 inches long; hopefully this will be a big year class in 2022. Trolling on the bottom in 100-120 feet of water did well for trollers, running flasher/fly with or without meat. Chrome worked well near Duluth, purple worked well farther up the shore. Pink/purple spoons also took some fish for trollers. The Two Harbors area had quite a few jiggers, doing well on structure 90-150 feet down. Rice's Point was rather slow, with few interviews and no fish from Lake Superior, and one angler who released a 36 inch Muskellunge and a couple of Northern Pike while fishing in the Estuary.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

During this reporting period, water surface temps maintained a steady warmth despite some strong blows. Water surface temps averaged in the low to mid 60s with averages slightly cooler farther north. The warm water extended deep, exceeding depths of 100 feet. Very strong offshore winds at midweek this week have likely changed this condition and lowered the surface temps. Angler pressure has dropped off to moderate levels from Silver Bay and Twin Points but remains more steady from Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais. Fishing was good, with anglers catching about 1 1/3 Lake Trout per trip and over 2 trout or salmon per trip. Anglers at all areas reported good and steadily improving catches of Lake Trout with many larger fish also. Many fish from all areas were bigger than 10 pounds and a few exceeded 20 pounds as well. While Lake Trout are pushing towards shoreline waters, they were present exclusively in deep water and not necessarily yet moving into shallower water or even associating with shoreline structure yet.

With warm water extending deep, anglers found that best results for both Lake Trout and salmon occurred when trolling at 100 feet and deeper. Fishing shallower, including the surface and shore angling, produced few good reports during this past week. Anglers continue to target Coho and Chinook salmon that were scattered and not strong in numbers anywhere. Salmon held quite deep and anglers sometimes caught fish deeper than 100 feet below the surface. Coho Salmon averaged 19-22 inches and Chinook Salmon average 18-30 inches with a few nice sized Chinook reported at near 10 pounds. One very nice 10 pound, adipose fin clipped Chinook was recorded from Grand Marais.

Anglers continued to catch many Pink Salmon and while anglers released most of them due to the fish's unimpressive size, anglers kept many in the 15-17 inch range. The male Pink Salmon are showing the classic hump shape as they near their spawn, which will be any day. While tributaries remain very low, a few of the largest tributaries hold flowing water and pinks may be able to enter them soon.

A few steelhead have been reported from most stations and anglers need to school up on their fish identification to stay legal by immediately releasing all unclipped steelhead that they catch. Anglers caught a wide range of sizes of steelhead, and as their appearance is variable and considering at this time of the season when the Coho and Chinook also become variable in their appearance, with both adults and juvenile fish present, identification between all these silver fish is tricky.

9/2/2021

Lower Shore— Duluth to Two Harbors:

Fishing conditions were often poor this past week, with strong winds either from the East or the West, depending on the day. Some decent weather occurred midweek when folks weren't fishing. Angler effort was low, however catch rates were fair, at about 1 fish per angler per trip. East winds pushed warm water toward Duluth and a few anglers caught Coho and Pink Salmon near the surface. Those who caught Lake Trout did so by fishing at depths of at least 100 feet while trolling mostly spoons. The Lake Trout were mostly 17-20 inches the past week, and Coho Salmon were anywhere from 16 to 20 inches, at least as reported by anglers. Some of the smaller fish are probably Pink Salmon which will move into the streams to spawn shortly. A year class of smaller Coho Salmon of around 10-11 inches were observed the past week and a few Chinook Salmon, or King Salmon, of around 15 inches were also caught. Most fish were eating 2-3 inch Rainbow Smelt fairly consistently. Warm water prevails again in the lower shore area, however the warm layer will probably thin with more westerly winds forecast for the next week. Typically this time of year fishing can be very productive when the weather cooperates. The key as usual is to find the prey schools and fish in or below them. Fishing in the lower end of the St. Louis River Estuary is minimal this time of year.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Anglers experienced some difficult weather conditions during this reporting period with fog and windy conditions. Winds were variable and strong at times. Winds have since settled from the east and warm water has again seated deeply along the mid to upper shore with 62-64 degrees being the normal surface temp report. Anglers with temp sensing equipment have reported that this warm water extends to beyond 100 feet below the surface. Angler pressure has been dropping off from mid shore stations but less so from Grand Marais. Overall, anglers did very well, catching a Lake Trout per angler per trip, and 4 fish per angler per trip on average, due to high catches of Pink Salmon.

Anglers from all stations have reported that fishing for salmon has been slowing down with salmon scattered throughout the top 150 feet of the water column and this makes it difficult to determine where in the water column to set lines. Anglers report that most Coho and Chinook Salmon have been caught scattered from 50-150 feet below the surface. Anglers from Grand Marais and Tac Harbor report that numbers of large Lake Trout have been on the increase and lakers exceeding 20 pounds have been reported. Anglers report that most lakers, especially larger fish, have been caught deeper, beyond one hundred feet below the

surface and scattered in near shore waters. While in the last two days numbers of Pink Salmon have been decreasing, many were caught during this reporting period. Pink Salmon average 15-17 inches and are now very much showing the change they undergo when they enter the rivers to spawn and this should be very soon.

8/26/2021

Lower Shore– Duluth

Strong westerly winds last week pushed the warm water layer away from the west end of the lake, especially from the nearshore areas. This change resulted in less warm water at the surface for salmon lately. A thermocline is re-establishing at 18-69 feet near McQuade, which will bring a bit of warmer surface water, especially if more easterly winds prevail soon. Angler effort declined over the past week in part due to slower fishing and to west winds, and success also declined to a bit over ½ fish per angler per trip. The west winds shifted the fishing offshore which is more hazardous for smaller boats. Most successful anglers used downriggers to catch Lake Trout at 120-150 feet depths near the bottom, using spoons in various colors including green and orange. The fish averaged 19-23 inches long with a few over 10 pounds. About 20% of the Lake Trout were the deepwater variety called siscowet. Jigging for Lake Trout in deep water near Two Harbors was not as successful as it was last week either. A few anglers also picked up some Chinook Salmon, running either around 16 inches or 24 inches, and some Coho Salmon, mostly about 20 inches. The salmon were caught at depths to 50 feet or so, mostly on spoons but a few on flasher/fly combos. Pink Salmon seem to have moved northward and may start showing up in north shore streams soon. Anglers near Duluth caught more salmon than did folks further north, sometimes several fish in the boat on a trip. Some of these trips were fairly close to shore and some were closer to the Wisconsin line.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Anglers along the mid and upper shore experienced some windy conditions during this reporting period and this not only made for difficult boating and control issues on the lake but it also mixed surface waters and lowered water surface temperatures into the low forty degree range from the upper shore, at times dropping into the upper thirty degree range, and variable from the low forty to the mid fifty degree range in mid shore areas. All stations have reported these variable temps as warm surface water moves in out from shore as wind directions change.

Angler pressure has been held down by brisk winds and even some very smoky conditions that have existed over the lake in recent days.

Anglers from Twin Points and Silver Bay report fair fishing for Lake Trout and salmon although fish are scattered and difficult to find. Anglers from mid shore stations report that the most consistent action for Lake Trout is generally in deep water and close to bottom structure which can be identified with electronics. Grand Marais area anglers report that while numbers of Lake Trout have not been strong, average fish size was good with fair numbers of lakereels exceeding ten pounds and most averaging in the 4-8 pound range. Lake Trout, especially larger fish, are reported to be scattered through the water column and at times very near to the surface.

Anglers caught Coho and Chinook Salmon throughout the upper shore areas, however the fish were scattered and inconsistent with no reliable patterns emerging. Seemingly depending on water temps, both at the surface and through the deeper water column, anglers from all stations report catching salmon scattered through the top 150 feet of the column, generally with Pink Salmon being found nearer to the surface. Pink Salmon continue in strong numbers from all stations and average from 14-18 inches with some running quite large and showing signs of their upcoming reproductive change. With the larger size of the pinks and also the regular late summer appearance of small classes of Coho and Chinook Salmon, these smaller salmon become more difficult to distinguish from each other.

Anglers from all stations report modest numbers of steelhead ranging from smaller 18 inchers to fish that are 27 inches and larger. Anglers need to be able to distinguish steelhead from salmon, which can be difficult and also important because salmon over 10 inches long are harvestable, clipped steelhead that are over 16 inches long are harvestable, but all unclipped steelhead must be released immediately.

8/19/2021

Lower Shore— Duluth to Two Harbors:

Most of the winds this past week have been out of the South or West, which pushed some of the warm water out of the area. This brought the thermocline closer to the surface and concentrated the fish more; good fishing was the result! The McQuade buoy probe data went online again. The surface temperatures were 72 degrees and the thermocline near shore was about 20 to 50 feet nearshore and 20 to 75 feet offshore. Surface temps were up to 67 degrees near Two Harbors as well. On average, interviewed anglers kept 1.5 fish per angler per trip. Most of these were Lake Trout, with a few larger Coho Salmon and smaller Chinook Salmon in the mix too, especially near Two Harbors. The size distribution of Lake Trout varied substantially from Duluth to Two Harbors, with fish from Duluth averaging 19 to 22 inches and fish from Two Harbors averaging 23 to 28 inches. Most fish are still hitting spoons, though some flasher/fly combos with meat caught Lake Trout, and some anglers used spinner type rigs on longlines to catch Cohos. Spoon color varied, with iridescent stripes and also oranges and greens. Bigger fish were caught while jigging on deep humps. Near Two Harbors, anglers picked up some decent sized Pink Salmon, and those fishing for salmon also caught Cohos that ranged in size from 16 to a hefty 22 inches. Anglers caught a few Chinooks also and most of those were smaller, which may indicate a stronger year class of larger fish next year. Minimal fishing occurred from Rice's Point in the St. Louis River Estuary.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Early this past week brisk west winds pushed warm water out and the water surface temps in the Grand Marais and Hovland areas decreased sharply into the upper 30s to lower 40s. In contrast to this, Taconite Harbor and Silver Bay did not experience this push of cold water and water temps remained near 60 degrees. Fishing changed during this cold water near shore condition with Lake Trout dissipating and a short term increase in the numbers of salmon in this cold water. Mid shore areas did not report this cold water condition and reports were very different during these few days but since then warmer water has drifted back into shore and now average surface temps are in the mid to upper 50s from the upper shore and slightly warmer from mid shore stations. While numbers of Coho Salmon have been steady from most stations, overall numbers are consistently light while the numbers of Pink Salmon continued to increase. Pink Salmon sized increased during these recent days, and anglers are more consistently misidentifying Pink Salmon as Cohos throughout the upper shore area. Although Pink Salmon have reached their max size for the season at 15-17 inches, they are still a bit small to interest anglers very much and they are also too

small to trip downrigger releases effectively and have at times been reported as a hindrance as these small fish can be dragged along undetected. Later in this reporting period, anglers have reported increasing numbers of Pinks from most locations, especially from Grand Marais where charters report catching dozens. Steelhead have been increasing in numbers, especially from Grand Marais and some have been misidentified and kept by anglers. Steelhead in the 24-28 inch range have been reported. Chinook Salmon remain few in numbers, although some reports were of increased numbers during cold water conditions. Lake Trout have been scattered and few in numbers from most stations but some very large lakereels exceeding twenty pounds have been reported from mid and upper shore stations. Angler pressure has been moderate with reduced numbers of anglers noticed from Twin Points and steady moderate pressure from Silver Bay and Taconite Harbor. Boat launching and associated available parking have been a real problem for Grand Marais area anglers as new boat launch access reconstruction continues with the only available access on the east side of the harbor. One angler reported catching and releasing a Kamloops from Twin Points and another Grand Marais angler reported catching and releasing several nice Brook Trout from the Grand Marais area.

8/12/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Anglers in the area dealt with more winds again this past week, which is not surprising. Small craft advisories pop up fairly frequently, this latest one arrived without a major weather front. The westerly winds have eroded the warm water layer near Duluth and the thermocline is now at 43 to 90 feet, though the surface temperature is still around 70 degrees. Fishing was fairly good at 1 fish per angler per trip, mostly because a higher proportion of boats were charters which can handle the rougher water. Most fish were caught at the bottom of or deeper than the thermocline, down to around 100-120 feet down. Jigging on humps in deep water near Two Harbors can also be productive this time of year. These depths require downriggers to get lures to depth. Deeper catches often include siscowet which inhabit the deep waters of Lake Superior. These fish grow slow due to the cold water but are generally fatter than the lean Lake Trout. The Lake Trout were larger on average, 21-26 inches, and fish up to 36 inches observed, which attracted attention among anglers from several boats. Spoons were most effective when fished in the thermocline and green and silver flasher/fly combos with meat are producing below the thermocline. Very few salmon were caught, and a few Walleye were caught as well, sometimes quite deep in the water column. The West end of the lake will be busy with boats this weekend, weather permitting, due to the Jaws tournament at Barkers Island. In the Estuary, fishing has been minimal for a while now and most watercraft at Rice's Point are pleasure boats or Lake Superior anglers fishing closer to Duluth and especially towards the Wisconsin side of the lake. These tend to be Walleye anglers.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Anglers have been confronted by some brisk afternoon winds and a few periods of thick fog during this reporting period. Upper shore water surface temps settled into a deep layer of warm water during this past week after cooling slightly earlier during this reporting period. Silver Bay and Taconite Harbor area anglers reported that water surface temps reached down into the low to mid fifty degree range for a few days before winds turned back onshore and moving warmer water back near shore but during this short time of cooler surface water conditions fishing was very good and many Lake Trout and salmon were caught near to the surface. Grand Marais did not seem to experience this cool down and water surface temps remained warm. Water surface temps averaged in the mid sixty degree range along the entire mid and upper shore for most of this reporting period. This mid sixty degree surface water generally seems to be too

warm and most anglers report best action for trout and salmon to be 70 to 100 feet below the surface over a variety of depth ranges. Anglers with expensive temperature reading equipment report that water temps have been warm down to the 70-80 foot range before cooling into the fifty degree range and this is where most successful anglers have been concentrating their efforts. While this information has been utilized effectively by informed anglers, anglers unaware of this information and the importance of targeting this depth-temperature range have been struggling to find fish. Taconite Harbor, Grand Marais and Hovland area anglers have reported very good fishing for Lake Trout in a variety of sizes with many lakery being larger fish in the 5-10 pound range and a fair number of Lake Trout have been reported nearing the twenty pound range. Not included in the numbers in this report was an angler who reported catching and releasing 45 Lake Trout during a successful trip while vertically jigging in deeper water and near to structure from Grand Marais. While fishing for Lake Trout has been good to excellent from many stations, anglers have reported that success for salmon has been falling off. Coho Salmon seem to be scattered along the entire mid to upper shore with no apparent concentrations of Coho at any one station. Numbers of Chinook Salmon have also dropped off and very few Chinooks were reported from any station. Pink Salmon continue to be caught from all stations and their growing size has been interesting anglers more so to keep these fish. Average size of Pink Salmon has increased to the 15-16 inch range. While a few reports have been received of steelhead being caught from all stations, overall numbers of steelhead have been light. Anglers fishing from shore have not had very much luck during this reporting period likely due to warm water conditions and fish holding generally deeper than shore anglers can reach.

8/5/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Most winds were coming from the west or north this past week and the winds pushed warm water away, resulting in a much narrower or nonexistent warm water layer near the surface. The University of Duluth-Minnesota nearshore buoy shows the water temperatures dropping from near 70 degrees at the surface to just 50 degrees at 20 feet down. More of a thermocline exists as boaters move toward the opposite shore. Angler effort was lower and fishing was fairly slow this past week, at a bit less than a fish per angler per trip. The change in thermocline will cause a change in fish distribution over the next few days and possibly a change in fishing methods and success as well. For Two Harbors anglers, Lake Trout were caught while jigging white and pink plastics in 150-200 feet of water near structure. Closer to Duluth, spoons in green or orange were still the common lure, and meat rigs were not as successful. Fish size varied considerably this past week. Salmon were scarce and were caught on squid imitations closer to shore. Catches included mostly Chinook, or King, Salmon which tend to be bigger than Coho Salmon. Anglers in a Walleye tournament from Rice's Point caught small Walleyes with crankbaits just outside of Park Point.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Water temperatures in the last couple of days the nearshore surface temperatures dropped into the low to mid 50s range. Warmer water around 60 degrees were still prevalent further offshore. Anglers experienced some brisk winds during afternoon hours, which reduces angler effort. Overall, anglers caught a little more than a fish per trip. Lake Trout were caught more in warmer offshore water and salmon were caught more in cooler nearshore areas. The best Lake Trout catches were in the top 100 feet and offshore. Most lakery were in the 3 to 10 pound range, however a fair number of smaller fish were caught recently. Regarding salmon, Twin Points and Silver Bay area anglers report good numbers of Coho Salmon in the 19-23 inch range with some large Coho nearing four pounds. Yes, these fish are as big as most lakery. The Cohos moved northward and are now at Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais more than at Silver Bay and Twin Points areas. Some nice sized Chinook in the 5-10 pound class have been reported from Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais. Anglers caught many Pink

Salmon in the 14-16 inch class and kept the larger ones, but most are still being released and are at times bothersome because the fish are sometimes not detected for a while after being hooked. A few anglers caught steelhead, scattered across the upper shore area. The Steelhead tended to be 22-25 inches long.

7/29/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Windy summer weather was common this past week, with some days of switching winds and weather that drove anglers off the lake. Surface water temperatures were in the high 60s and in some areas toward Wisconsin were in the 70s, which enticed some folks to take a dip to cool off. The thermocline has moved closer to the surface, at 55 to 80 feet down and the temperature drops from the mid 60s to the mid 40s within about 30 feet of depth. Most fish were caught in 50-90 feet of water, though a couple of groups caught fish at 150-200 feet, or even in shallower water when jigging off the humps near Two Harbors. Angler success was not as good as last week, at about $\frac{3}{4}$ fish per angler per trip, but the Lake Trout are bigger than previously, at 19-34 inches on average, with a couple over 30 inches as well and several over 25 inches. Salmon fishing remains slow in the lower shore area and most anglers are targeting Lake Trout. Trolling is most effective and jigging can also be productive especially over structure. Spoons in oranges and greens were common, also with flasher/fly combinations, and with meat as well. The Lake Trout were targeting smelt or smaller herring lately.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Weather conditions during this reporting period were mixed with windy conditions forcing lake boaters and anglers to stay aware and close to port, especially small boaters. Winds have kept surface waters from continuing to warm and have lowered water temps slightly during this reporting period into the mid fifty to low sixty degree range from most stations and slightly cooler further up the shore. Angler pressure has been moderate during this reporting period with wind and a few bouts of thunder and rain keeping angler pressure at a moderate level. Success declined somewhat this past week, down to about 1 fish per angler per trip. Lake Trout have been reported as scattered in both near shore and off shore areas and throughout the water column with fish being reported caught both deep and also very near to the surface. While this has been reported from most stations, numbers of Lake Trout are good and the size range being caught is a very good average size of 3-7 pounds with some very good looking fish being caught. Anglers from Silver Bay and Twin Points have continued to report good numbers of Coho Salmon in the 18-22 inch range, averaging two to three pounds. Fewer Chinooks have been reported more from mid shore areas than from farther north. Anglers from the Taconite Harbor, Grand Marais and Horseshoe Bay have reported good fishing with a mix of Coho, Pink and Chinook Salmon. Some nice sized Chinook Salmon have been reported in the 24-30 inch range and weighing up to near ten pounds. Most Chinooks have been in that 2-4 pound range. Anglers continue to catch Pink Salmon in the 13-15 inch range and anglers have reported that at times many Pinks were caught.

7/22/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Summer weather prevailed this past week and water temperatures are above 60 degrees all the way down to 75 feet near McQuade. Fishing effort picked up and anglers did quite well when they fished deep. The thermocline started at 75 feet and temperatures dropped quickly below that. Anglers who fished shallower did poorly, catching about ½ fish per trip, whereas those who fished deep with downriggers or jigging had catch rates of about 1.25 fish per trip. The salmon were scattered and sparse again this week, having moved northward toward Silver Bay and points north. For trolling, more fish were caught on flasher/fly combinations, as expected since most of the fish were deeper in dim light and the extra flash gets the fish's attention. Smelt were often part of the lure setup as well. Most of the Lake Trout are the lean variety, however a few fat siscowets were caught as well, indicating that anglers are going deep to catch fish. The Lakers were smaller, generally 18-20 inches long with a few down to 15 inches and not many larger fish. In the St. Louis Estuary, fishing is fairly slow, however one party did catch over a dozen Walleyes.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Water surface temps soared during this reporting period with surface temperatures widely reported as exceeding seventy degrees in middle shore waters and reaching into the mid sixty degree range into upper shore areas. Since then a few moderate breezes blew temperatures into the mid sixty degree range in mid shore waters. Anglers with temperature equipment that reads through the water column report that this warm water continues quite deep. Angler pressure has been moderate to heavy from most stations. Grand Marais anglers are beginning to experience real trouble finding available parking in the one available boat launch on the east side with it being increasingly packed with tourists. This condition in Grand Marais is to continue through next summer with the main angler boat landing on the west side of the harbor being closed for reconstruction. During the upcoming weeks, with increasing tourist numbers expected, anglers from Grand Marais are talking more about driving to Horseshoe Bay or Taconite Harbor to find less congested conditions.

Overall, catch rates were high and anglers caught over 1 ½ fish per trip. From Grand Marais, fishing for Lake Trout has greatly improved during this reporting period with good numbers of Lake Trout in the 22-25 inch class suddenly becoming a common catch. These are nice sized Lake Trout averaging from four to six pounds and anglers hope to see these nice lakers remain in near shore waters. Most of these Lake Trout have been caught scattered through the water column and nearer to the surface at times. All stations have reported good numbers of Lake Trout of nice size, including Hovland and Twin Points where numbers of Lake Trout reported have been good. Silver Bay reported numbers of large Lake Trout registered in the fishing contest this past weekend with the winning size laker better than twenty six pounds and all in the top five places exceeding twenty two pounds. Coho Salmon are spread along the entire mid to upper shore with better numbers apparent from no station yet with consistent enough numbers to be holding the attention of many anglers who continue to target them from all stations. Few Chinook Salmon have been reported from all stations with possibly better numbers from the Hovland. Anglers from all stations continue to report Pink Salmon in their catch with most tossed back due to small size.

7/15/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Weather was conducive for fishing this past week, and the fish generally cooperated. Water surface temperatures rose to 72 degrees, mid 60s degree water extended to 59 feet, and the thermocline was at 59-108 feet. The warmer water extended all the way to Agate Bay. Overall anglers did well, averaging over 1 fish per angler per trip. Salmon were scattered and sparse, and were caught in depths down to about 50 feet. Lake Trout catches were good and most fish were

caught in the thermocline, starting at about 80 feet. A few fish, though, were caught down around 40 feet. Where there is bottom structure, such as near Agate Bay, Lake Trout were caught by anglers jigging spoons near the bottom, and some fish followed lures to the surface and then hit the lures. For trolling, several types of lures and baits caught fish, including stickbaits, spoons, flasher/fly combinations in green and green/white colors and also prepared baits such as smelt or herring. Most of the Lake Trout were in the 20-23 inch range. One very nice Chinook Salmon was also caught and seen by many other anglers, at 32 inches and 15.5 pounds, which is enough to create long-lasting memories for most anglers. In the Saint Louis River Estuary, fishing remained slow.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Weather this past week was good for fishing, with steady onshore winds and water surface temperatures that warmed through the 50s and even into the low 60s near the midshore areas. Water temps are only slightly cooler in the Grand Marais and Hovland areas, holding steady in the mid to upper 50s. The warm water extends quite deep into the water column at some locations along the upper shore. Angler effort has increased and success is higher now, at 1 ½ fish per angler per trip overall. Anglers from Silver Bay and Twin Points had good luck for Lake Trout in the 19-22 inch range with a few larger fish too. Lake Trout were reported scattered with most caught suspended in the mid water column. Good numbers of Coho Salmon continue to be reported from mid shore areas. Most Coho were in the 18-21 inch range and mostly caught in the top forty feet of water, though some anglers have reported catching Coho holding deeper also. Taconite Harbor area anglers report good fishing with good numbers of Coho being caught in recent days. They also caught fair numbers of Lake Trout scattered through the water column with some larger fish caught near to the surface in waters further off shore. Grand Marais and Hovland anglers report mixed fishing for Coho and while numbers are improving, fishing has been tough for some. Grand Marais anglers caught few Lake Trout, however fishing was better in the Hovland area. Pink salmon continue to be caught throughout the upper shore area, a few of the fish were large enough to keep, however many were 12-14 inches long and were released. Some anglers released fish they identified as Pink Salmon but were probably Coho Salmon. In either case, those fish were small. Identifying salmon species can be a challenge especially for smaller fish. A few nice sized Chinook Salmon were caught, some reaching ten pounds, however the fish are scattered and infrequent. Steelhead remain low throughout the upper shore area.

7/8/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Weather was either good or really windy this past week and temperatures were warm for the long weekend, rising to 64 degrees at the surface before dropping a couple of degrees over the last couple of days. When the weather was good, effort was relatively high. Fishing, however, was fairly slow, averaging a bit over ½ fish per angler per trip. Most of the fish were Lake Trout, which were caught across a wide range of depths from 50 to 150 feet down, often on the bottom but sometimes eating bugs off the surface. The warm water extended down to 92 feet and the thermocline was sharp below that. The thermocline will stay deep until stronger west winds occur. Most success was with spoons in green, red, white, or chrome, or with flasher/fly combinations. Farther north, jigging produced some fish. The Lake Trout were generally 20-23 inches long with a fish or two over 30 inches. Salmon were scarce and were also scattered across the lake, mostly near the surface.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Upper shore boaters experienced fair weather with a few periods of choppy and windy conditions and a few thunderstorms. Water surface temps warmed in earnest and especially along the middle shore near Silver Bay and Twin Points, reaching 60 degrees in spots. Average surface temps from Grand Marais and Hovland ranged from the mid 40s to the 50s in near shore waters. More consistently warmer waters can be found generally in further offshore waters while surface temps swing more drastically near to shore. Anglers from Silver Bay and Twin Points have enjoyed good action for Coho Salmon in the 17-20 inch range and angler pressure has quickly ramped up from both of those accesses. The Twin Points access has been at capacity for boat and trailer parking there recently. Pink Salmon continue to be reported from all accesses, many being released as they are of small and skinny stature and only in the 11-13 inch range. Very few Chinook Salmon have been reported anywhere. Anglers from Grand Marais continue to wait for salmon to move into the area and report mostly slow fishing recently. Anglers from Grand Marais continue to complain of very slow fishing for Lake Trout also and with boaters also experiencing difficult parking and a closed public boat access on the west side of the harbor, times are tough from Grand Marais recently and angler pressure has been moderate. One large Lake Trout in the mid teens pound class was reported as released from the Tofte area and a larger sized chinook was reported from a Grand Marais angler but numbers of chinooks are light. Catches of steelhead in the lake were minimal this past week.

7/1/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Weather was mostly good this past week, excepting a bit of fog now and then and a blowout day on Thursday. As of Friday morning the surface temperature at McQuade was 63 degrees and a thermocline was set up at 75-108 feet, conditions that were enhanced by strong easterly winds. The deep thermocline and warm surface temperatures will probably remain until stronger west winds change the profile, maybe after the hot weekend weather. Fishing was fair this past week, averaging almost a fish per angler per trip. Fishing depths ranged from near 20-60 feet in 80-140 feet of water for Coho Salmon to depths up to 150 feet for Lake Trout. Most fish were caught while trolling; however, Two Harbors anglers are now jigging in 100-150 feet and fish are following spoons to the surface, often in colors of green/chrome or bloody nose. For trolled lures, color choice ranged widely, including oranges, purple, and multi-color and white patterns. Anglers are beginning to use flasher/fly combinations with red or white patterns and with smelt. The Lake Trout are running about 19-23 inches on average, with several in the 25-27 inch range. The Coho Salmon are 18-20 inches now and their numbers are fairly low. A few anglers picked up 23-26 inch Chinook Salmon.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Water surface temperatures fluctuated as winds shifted this past week. Surface water temps are in the mid 50s or warmer when Easterly winds or no winds blow, and in the 40s when Westerly winds push warm water away from the area. Angler pressure was moderate and even a bit light from most accesses. This is unusual from Silver Bay and Twin Points which normally see increasing angler pressure as salmon fishing picks up. Overall, anglers caught over a fish per trip, mostly due to increasing numbers of Coho Salmon. Anglers from mid shore areas near Silver Bay and Twin Points continue to report improving fishing for Coho Salmon in the 17-20 inch class. Coho are scattered about and generally in the top 40 feet of the water column. Silver Bay anglers report scattered Lake Trout and with the general warming of near shore waters anglers are no longer travelling far from shore looking for a cold-warm water transitions. Anglers from Taconite Harbor report fair numbers of Coho while further up the shore in Grand Marais and Hovland, anglers report fewer Coho as one travels up the shore. Lake Trout

fishing at Grand Marais remains slow, whereas better fishing is occurring from Hovland and Taconite Harbor when anglers fish in deep water. Anglers from all accesses report Pink Salmon in the 12-14 inch range. The fish are small and skinny. Anglers caught few Chinook.

6/24/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Weather has been good for fishing lately, with more westerly winds, minimal rain except on one day, and low fog. The nearshore weather buoy near McQuade indicated a thermocline existed from 40 to 60 feet and surface temperature was 61 degrees. Most anglers had been going far offshore to find bug slicks and temperature gradients, however some folks have migrated back to the nearshore area recently, probably because the steeper temperature breaks are available closer to shore. Successful anglers are using more spoons while trolling in 50-200 feet of water and 15-30 feet down for salmon and in or below the thermocline for Lake Trout. Colors include red and orange-white combinations. The Lake Trout are running about 19-22 inches on average, with a few in the 25-27 inch range. The Coho Salmon are 17-19 inches now and their numbers are fairly low. A few anglers picked up Chinook, or King, Salmon and those fish were 25 inches long or so. A few anglers also caught Pink Salmon, which are smaller and have large spots. In the St. Louis River Estuary, fishing is slow and effort is low. When boating there, watch out for other boaters who may or may not be paying attention to fishing craft.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Water surface temps were variable but mostly on the cold side along the upper shore this past week. On quiet and warm days, some areas of surface water warmed into the 40s and even into the low 50s, however any wind disperses the warm water and the surface temps drop into the low 40s and upper 30s. Angler pressure has remained fairly light at all stations. This is somewhat unusual in the Twin Points and Silver Bay areas, as more anglers usually show up as more salmon are caught. Silver Bay and Twin Points anglers have reported scattered Coho Salmon in modest numbers while anglers from Taconite Harbor and Grand Marais are just seeing the first Coho Salmon of the summer. The Cohos were generally 16-20 inches long. Only a few Chinook Salmon have been reported and while most Chinook reports are of smaller fish in the 2-3 pound range, one charter captain from Grand Marais reported catching a ten pound Chinook. Lake Trout fishing from Grand Marais has been slow. Anglers have reported few suspended fish and usual deep water structure in the area has been showing only a light scattering of Lake Trout, as reported consistently by Grand Marais area anglers. Anglers from Taconite Harbor and Horseshoe Bay have reported better action for Lake Trout in deep water and near structure areas.

Silver Bay anglers have reported that some large Lake Trout, some exceeding twenty pounds, have been caught in far off shore waters as those warmer waters begin to press across the open lake from south to north. Reports are of widespread surface water temps well exceeding 50 degrees over open waters and far off shore from Silver Bay. Anglers from Grand Marais continue to catch small Pink Salmon in fair numbers.

6/17/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

The past week's weather was better for boating than in previous weeks, with calmer weather and water temperatures warming into the low 50s near Two Harbors and winds generally more favorable when fog wasn't a factor. However, even with good weather angler pressure is low. Success is spotty and widespread, with a few anglers limiting out and a lot only picking up a fish, at most. Those who launched from Duluth frequently traveled to the Pumphouse and beyond in search of fish. Most fish were near the surface and down to 20 feet or so. The Lake Trout are mostly 20-22 inches long and the Chinook Salmon varied,

with some over 30 inches. Cohos have been scarce near Duluth. Some folks are beginning to rely on spoons more, plus a few flasher/fly combinations and sometimes with prepared smelt are picking up a few fish as well. A few anglers caught Walleye again this past week, but the number of anglers who were interviewed was fairly low so it's difficult to determine if a real drop in Walleye success has occurred. Fishing in the St. Louis Estuary has been fairly quiet lately. Fishing seems more like the July season now than June.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Upper shore surface temps continued to slowly warm. Actual average surface temperatures were 42-45 degrees generally, but higher on calm, sunny days. Angler pressure, while steadily increasing, is still light to moderate as anglers wait for waters to warm up. Silver Bay and Twin Points anglers caught a few Coho Salmon in the 17-18 inch range and anglers are expecting more Cohos to show up soon. Some anglers from Silver Bay with larger boats ran far off shore targeting large Lake Trout and Salmon as warmer water presses nearer to the north shore. These offshore forays have been relatively unsuccessful. Anglers at all upper shore stations continue to target Lake Trout in deep water areas from 150 to 200 feet, and deeper, and generally near to deep structure and near to bottom. Sonar and deep water capable fishing equipment are a real advantage to anglers searching for structure and fish near these deep water haunts. Anglers from Grand Marais, and less so from Taconite Harbor, continue to catch small Pink Salmon in the 12-15 inch class. Numbers of these Pink Salmon have been fair but the fish are a bit small to interest anglers very much. Anglers from Grand Marais and Silver Bay have reported catching a few steelhead in the 24-28 inch range. A few Chinook Salmon have been reported from Grand Marais in the 17-20 inch range.

6/10/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

The past week's weather has negatively affected fishing, with somewhat better weather than the previous week but with changing water temperatures and the location of many fish several miles out and away from Duluth at times. A quick switch in the weather on the 5th of Saturday afternoon sent anglers scrambling for cover and a few rescue boats searched for swimmers in the water and boats that had stalled at the most inopportune time. Shore temperatures dropped from 90 to 67 within an hour. Always be aware of weather conditions when on Lake Superior, and especially pay attention to the near-term forecast. Surface water temperatures have been more consistently above 50 degrees including near Two Harbors. At one point prior to the past weekend quite a few anglers did well close to Duluth and were picking up fish close to the surface down to about 20 feet. Those fish have moved out and the Duluth anglers are traveling to the Pumphouse and northward in search of fish. Effort at the Knife River marina is increasing as angler move northward and as the water warms. Lake Trout and Salmon fish remain high in the water column and sometimes over deep water. Anglers targeted the bug slicks and minimal temperature gradients to find fish, still using mostly stickbaits and now a few spoons as well. Most Lake Trout were 20-22 inches long with a few up to 30 inches or so. A few anglers were blessed with Chinook Salmon, also called King Salmon, and some of these fish were over 24 inches long and weighed over 5 pounds. Coho Salmon have been a challenge to find and hook up on; these fish may be biting lightly, as a couple of anglers had plenty of hits but few fish to the boat. The fish are eating a range of prey, including bugs and bees and ants, plus a few with smaller Rainbow Smelt from last year's hatch, as well as the aquatic invertebrate Mysids. The Sea Lamprey wounding rate appears to be low near Duluth, which is a good sign for the very near future. In the St. Louis Estuary, Walleye fishing has been fairly slow since the

middle of May. Anglers are catching a few Channel Catfish in spots, but not much else. Most Walleyes are still being caught in the lake and these are generally 20-25 inches long.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Upper shore anglers reported surface water temperatures warming into the mid 50s and averaging in the mid 40s. Weather conditions have been variable with onshore winds and also a few thunderstorms and periods of heavy fog, keeping angler pressure mostly light. Anglers from Grand Marais have reported slow fishing for Lake Trout, and all anglers, including charters, have reported the same slow fishing while targeting Lake Trout in deep water and near structure. This is not usual for anglers that are accustomed to finding more fish on these deep water hotspots. Reports from Taconite Harbor are somewhat better with fair fishing for smaller Lake Trout in water from 150-200 feet and near to bottom. Silver Bay anglers are beginning to run far offshore waiting and searching for the warmer water to proceed across the open lake towards the North Shore. This tactic is usual for the Silver Bay area and anglers can generally find larger Lake Trout and some salmon edging along with this warm water as it nears Silver Bay. This method comes with the risk of fishing many miles from shore. Anglers from Grand Marais have recently reported catching good numbers of Pink Salmon, which is very early for pinks to be caught. These fish have been quite small, in the 12-14 inch range and a bit small to interest anglers very much. One charter reports pulling up lines to avoid catching Pink Salmon in areas where they are usually found, in the 30-60 foot below the surface range and over deep water. Anglers from Grand Marais have reported a few unclipped steelhead caught and released in recent days.

5/28/2021

Lower Shore – Duluth to Two Harbors:

Due to the early season, data for this report begins a week early. Several anglers reported good catches of Coho Salmon in April and early May. The Rainbow Smelt run attracted a lot of attention this year due to good weather and adequate river conditions. Late May produced some windy days, including a couple of Small Craft Advisories which shut down the fishing. Water temperatures fluctuated quite a bit, reaching to 57 degrees at one point, but winds have brought temperatures down to the 40s. The University of Duluth's weather buoy website is not yet functioning for the nearshore and offshore buoys near McQuade. Weather conditions must have been just right to push the warm surface layers from the lake and into the West end and reach the depths that it did. Fishing was a challenge at times when the thermocline disappeared. Some anglers resorted to fishing the edge of the mudline from the Nemadji outflow. At the end of this past week anglers were fishing fairly shallow, 8-30 feet in 80 feet of water to catch Lake Trout. Some folks also caught Cohos at the shallower depths. Most fish were caught on stickbaits. Fish size range varied considerably, from 17 to 26 inches for Lakers and up to 34 inches for Chinook Salmon. The Cohos were 15-17 inches long.

Upper Shore – Twin Points to Hovland:

Upper shore anglers experienced a week of limiting weather conditions with persistent fog being a daily norm for this reporting period. Windy conditions periodically contributed to low angler activity as well, sometimes at the same time. Water surface temps were cold, as usual, averaging 38-39 degrees with reports of pockets of water reaching 40 degrees. Some of the warm surface layer seems to have blown into the Duluth area. Marinas in Grand Marais and Silver Bay have an unusually strong number of boats filling slips at this early point of the season and the word from marinas is that slips are full for the summer with

waiting lists in place for slip availability. Silver Bay reports that another full slip dock is to be installed for the first time ever, raising availability by 25%. During this cold water season, upper shore anglers have limited opportunities with the best option being targeting Lake Trout in deep water and near to bottom structure and this norm has been the usual report so far this year. This deep water fishing requires experience with locations and techniques and is difficult for inexperienced anglers to successfully undertake. Jigging and trolling are the two techniques usually used by anglers along with use of wire line and heavy weights to pull lures deep. Generally, very few fish are caught near to the surface or in shallow water until surface waters begin to warm. I have received a few reports of fair catches of Lake Trout from river mouths of larger tributaries including the Brule, Cascade and Poplar rivers.

Charters have begun their season and charter captains from Grand Marais, Tac Harbor and Silver Bay have reported fair catches of Lake Trout from deep water. Most Lake Trout caught from deep water are smaller fish in the 1-3 pound class and that has been the usual report so far. A few reports have been received of Chinook salmon in the 2-4 pound range caught from deep water, although only few.