

2022 North Shore Fishing Report

The Minnesota DNRs Lake Superior Area Fisheries staff provide weekly updates on North Shore stream conditions, catch totals at the Knife and French river fish traps, and smelting. Updates are posted every Thursday throughout the spring on the [Lake Superior Area Fisheries website](#) and recorded on the Lake Superior Fishing Report hotline (218-302-3293).

Three Minnesota DNR creel census clerks are on the rivers nearly every day throughout the spring (ice out through late-May) to collect information on fishing pressure, catch and catch-rates of fish in Minnesota's tributaries to Lake Superior. Clerks also provide updates on stream conditions that are useful to North Shore stream anglers (i.e., water temperatures, river stage, water levels, and water clarity). Your input and cooperation are greatly appreciated if/when a creel clerk approaches you for an interview.

The Minnesota DNRs Knife River fish trap is used to monitor the abundance and health of migratory fishes in Minnesota waters of Lake Superior (particularly of migratory Rainbow Trout [steelhead]), and to monitor Sea lamprey control efforts in Lake Superior. The trap captures adult fish migrating upstream and adult and juvenile fish migrating downstream from the Knife River to the lake. The adult trap is operated during annual spawning runs of steelhead in the spring and many other trout (Brook and Brown Trout) and salmon (Coho, Chinook, and Pink Salmon) spawning runs in the fall. A fish trap and seining effort are used to capture adult Rainbow Trout that return to the French River in the spring. Steelhead captured at French River provide eggs to replenish a captive Lake Superior strain steelhead broodstock at Crystal Springs Coldwater Hatchery in Altura, Minnesota. Offspring produced from the captive steelhead broodstock are clipped and stocked back into North Shore streams and are legal to be harvested when they measure at least 16 inches ([MNDNR Fishing Regulations](#)).



PHOTO: Minnesota DNR employee, Eric Torvinen, holds the first steelhead captured at the Knife River Fish Trap on April 18, 2022.

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North Shore Stream Conditions		Week of: May 20-23, 2022			Current Stream Conditions (May 23)		
Shore Zone	Creel Station	Avg. Water Temp. (°F)	Min. Water Temp. (°F)	Max. Water Temp. (°F)	River Stage	Water Level	Water Clarity
Lower Shore	Lester River	52	54	48	Receding	Average	Clear
	McQuade/Talmadge River	50	52	48	Receding	Average	Clear
	French River	50	51	49	Receding	Average	Clear
	Sucker River	50	51	50	Receding	Average	Clear
	Knife River	51	53	48	Receding	Average	Clear
Middle Shore	Stewart River	47	49	46	Stable	Average	Slightly Turbid
	Silver Creek	50	50	49	Stable	Average	Slightly Turbid
	Gooseberry River	51	51	51	Stable-Receding	Average	Slightly Turbid
	Split Rock River	47	47	47	Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid
	Beaver River	51	51	51	Stable-Falling	Average	Clear
	Baptism River	50	50	50	Stable-Falling	Average	Clear
Upper Shore	Cross River	44	45	42	Receding	High	Clear
	Temperance River	46	48	42	Receding	High	Slightly Turbid
	Poplar River	46	49	44	Receding	High	Turbid
	Cascade River	47	48	46	Receding	High	Slightly Turbid
	Devil Track River	44	45	42	Receding	High	Slightly Turbid
	Kadunce River	43	45	41	Receding	Average	Slightly Turbid
	Brule River	47	48	45	Receding	High	Slightly Turbid

****THIS IS THE FINAL UPDATE FOR SPRING 2022. THE SUMMER CREEL UPDATES WILL BE POSTED ON THURSDAY AFTER MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND.**

Lower Shore Creel Report: Andrew Larson

A bit of rain added some color and water to the rivers early in the week, and daily and overnight temps kept water temps around 50°, keeping fish in the rivers and perhaps bringing in a couple fresh fish. Fishing pressure and success were low in general, except for increased pressure on one or two rivers. STT were visible on redds in most rivers most days. I didn't notice any STT leaping falls this week-many are likely upstream and actively spawning or have returned to the lake.

Upper Shore Creel Report: Phil Kunze

Upper shore rivers have improved after the heavy rain and snowmelt last week caused much damage and widespread changes to rivers, banks, and low-lying trails. Flows have receded but are still quite high and formidable for anglers. Wading in any of the larger rivers remains treacherous with eroded banks and newly created deep water and continued strong flows. River water temps have remained cold with cold overnight temperatures and remained in the low to mid forty-degree range. Anglers reported best success for steelhead in smaller tributaries. Large rivers should be good during the next few weeks as flows continue to recede, and steelhead continue to return to spawn. Anglers have observed fresh steelhead in many rivers, and some that appear beat up suggesting that some fish remained close in the heavy flooding flows last week. Angler pressure was consistently light during this reporting period, but some anglers are coming out for a first look after the flooding. No reports of lake trout being caught in river mouths and very few reports of brook trout being caught.

Smelt Report Update: Smelt season is over for 2022

Please be aware of the high levels of PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) discovered in Rainbow smelt in Lake Superior and understand the potential risks associated with the new [Rainbow Smelt consumption advisory](#). More information about smelt is provided in the [Smelt on the North Shore fact sheet](#) on the MN DNR Lake Superior Area Fisheries office website.

Trap Catch Update (as of May 31, 2022)

		Knife River Trap		French River Trap (now closed for 2022)	
Open Date:	April 11, 2022		April 18, 2022		
Close Date:	TBD		May 20, 2022		
Month	Unclipped Rainbow Trout	Adipose clipped (stocked) Rainbow Trout	Brook Trout	Unclipped Rainbow Trout	Adipose clipped (stocked) Rainbow Trout
April	20	0	0	0	0
May	293	10	3	33	15
Total	313	12	3	33	15

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North Shore Stream Conditions		Week of: April 29-May 5, 2022			Current Stream Conditions (May 5)		
Shore Zone	River	Avg. Water Temp. (°F)	Min. Water Temp. (°F)	Max. Water Temp. (°F)	River Stage	Water Level	Water Clarity
Lower Shore	Lester River	38.1	34.8	45.1	Stable	Average	Clear
	McQuade/Talmadge River	37.3	32.0	45.0	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid
	French River	37.1	32.1	44.8	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid
	Sucker River	36.5	32.6	41.8	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid
	Knife River	37.6	34.9	42.2	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid
Middle Shore	Stewart River	33.6	33.0	35.4	Stable/Falling	Average-High	Slightly Turbid
	Silver Creek	35.3	33.2	41.0	Stable/Falling	Average-High	Slightly Turbid
	Gooseberry River	34.9	32.9	40.9	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Split Rock River	35.7	32.5	41.8	Stable/Falling	Average-High	Slightly Turbid
	Beaver River	34.6	32.6	36.3	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Baptism River	34.3	32.9	37.0	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
Upper Shore	Cross River	34.1	33.5	34.8	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Temperance River	33.5	33.1	33.8	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Poplar River	34.3	34.1	34.4	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Cascade River	33.7	33.5	33.9	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Devil Track River	33.9	33.5	34.1	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Kadunce River	33.8	33.1	34.6	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid
	Brule River	34.1	33.8	34.5	Stable	High	Slightly Turbid

Lower Shore Creel Report: Andrew Larson

Heavy rain last weekend greatly raised river levels and melted a lot of snow, which allowed river temps to reach 45°F by 5/3/22 after a few days of warm sunny weather. Overall, we saw moderate fishing pressure or and variable but relatively low catches of steelhead this report period. Angling activity and catch rates should improve in the next few days with plenty of water and rivers reaching mid- to upper-40s. Smelt are being caught along Park Point and at some Lower Shore rivers. I had one recent report of smelt observed in the Beaver River near Beaver Bay.

Upper Shore Creel Report: Phil Kunze

We had well over one inch of rain over the last week and it dramatically raised upper shore rivers. Lots of snow persists inland and has contributed to strong flows and cold water. Temperatures that have not yet reached past the mid thirty-degree range. Large rivers have been high with much ice, debris and turbid water. Smaller tributaries were more manageable for anglers and anglers reported some success. With very cold water persisting, I have not yet received angler reports of suckers, few brook trout, and no reports of smelting activity yet. Angler pressure was mostly light during this past week.

Smelt Report: ARE THE SMELT RUNNING YET? YES!

**Please be aware of the high levels of PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) discovered in Rainbow smelt in Lake Superior and understand the potential risks associated with the new [Rainbow Smelt consumption advisory](#).

Smelt are being caught at Park Point and Lester River but catches have been relatively low and variable. River temperatures are ideal for smelting, but temperatures at Park Point have been a bit colder in the mid- to upper 30-degree range. Smelt can be caught now and catches will likely improve over the next week. More information about smelt is provided on the [Smelt on the North Shore fact sheet](#) on the MN DNR Lake Superior Area Fisheries office website.

Trap Catch Update (as of May 6, 2022)

Knife River Adult Trap		French River Adult Trap	
*Opened April 11, 2022.		*Opened April 11, 2022.	
Unclipped (wild-produced) Rainbow Trout:	156	9	
Clipped (stocked) Rainbow Trout:	5	10	
Brook Trout:	0	0	

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North Shore Stream Conditions		Week of: April 22-28, 2022			Current Stream Conditions		
Shore Zone	River	Avg. Water Temp. (°F)	Min. Water Temp. (°F)	Max. Water Temp. (°F)	River Stage	Water Level	Water Clarity
Lower Shore	Lester River	35.5	33.8	37.9	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid
	McQuade/Talmadge River	34.8	33.7	36.5	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid
	French River	35.4	34.1	37.6	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Tubid
	Sucker River	34.9	33.3	36.9	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Tubid
	Knife River	34.7	32.5	39.0	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Tubid
Middle Shore	Stewart River	33.1	32.8	33.3	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid/Turbid
	Silver Creek	32.8	32.5	33.4	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid/Turbid
	Gooseberry River	33.3	32.6	34.2	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid/Turbid
	Split Rock River	32.9	32.3	34.1	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid/Turbid
	Beaver River	33.0	32.6	33.2	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid/Turbid
	Baptism River	33.5	32.6	34.6	Stable/Falling	Average	Slightly Turbid/Turbid
Upper Shore	Cross River	33.0	33.0	33.0	Stable/Falling	Normal	Slightly Turbid
	Temperance River	33.0	33.0	33.0	Stable/Falling	Normal/High	Slightly Turbid
	Poplar River	33.0	33.0	33.0	Stable	Normal	Slightly Turbid
	Cascade River	33.0	33.0	33.0	Stable	Normal	Slightly Turbid
	Devil Track River	32.7	32.0	33.0	Stable	Normal/High	Slightly Turbid
	Kadunce River	32.8	32.0	33.0	Stable/Falling	Normal	Slightly Turbid
	Brule River	33.0	33.0	33.0	Stable	Normal/High	Slightly Turbid

Lower Shore Creel Report: Andrew Larson

Knife River water temp hit 39°F on 4/27! Strong NE winds on several days reduced shore-fishing opportunities. Heavy rain over the weekend and melting snow had rivers running high, dirty, and cold for a few days, but flows returned to more normal levels and the water cleared up some by 4/27. Not many fish caught, as well as relatively low fishing pressure. Most steelhead have been dark in color, with some brighter fish reported on 4/27. Smelt are staging in close off river mouths and in harbors (the birds were coming up with smelt on 4/27).

Upper Shore Creel Report: Phil Kunze

Upper shore rivers rose sharply with recent rainfall this week but have since been dropping off and clearing up following cold nighttime temperatures that slowed the snowmelt. With very much snow yet to melt inland, water temps have remained cold, and averages have been holding in the low thirty degree range with no readings yet exceeding 35°F. Anglers have reported fair to good fishing for steelhead in most rivers. Flows are very good and most of the ice was lost following rising water levels and fresh rain this past week. Angler pressure has been light.

Smelt Report: ***ARE THE SMELT RUNNING YET? NO...ALMOST...***

**Please be aware of the high levels of PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) discovered in Rainbow smelt in Lake Superior and understand the potential risks associated with the new [Rainbow Smelt consumption advisory](#).

Smelt were present in McQuade Harbor and a creel clerk observed them being eaten by migrating Loons. A few reports of smelting activity can be found in online forums, but success rates were low. The extended forecast calls for continued cold conditions for one more week and rain. I would expect smelt are staging near rivers and will be catchable within a week or two. More information about smelt is provided on the [Smelt on the North Shore fact sheet](#) on the MN DNR Lake Superior Area Fisheries office website.

Knife River Adult Trap Catch Totals (as of April 28)

Unclipped (wild-produced) Rainbow Trout:	11
Clipped (stocked) Rainbow Trout:	0
Brook Trout:	0

****French River Adult Trap Totals (Opening date TBD)**

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North Shore Stream Conditions (April 16-21, 2022)

Shore Zone	River	Avg. Water Temp. (°F)	Min. Water Temp. (°F)	Max. Water Temp. (°F)	River Stage	Water Level	Water Clarity
Lower Shore	Lester River	35.1	33.5	37.5	Stable	Moderate/High	Slightly Turbid
	McQuade/Talmadge	33.3	32.5	34.5	Stable	Average	Slightly Turbid
	French River	33.9	31.9	35.0	Stable	Moderate/High	Slightly Turbid
	Sucker River	33.2	32.3	34.3	Stable	Moderate/High	Slightly Turbid
	Knife River	33.5	32.5	34.5	Stable	Moderate/High	Turbid
Middle Shore	Stewart River	33.0	32.1	34.4	Stable	Moderate	Slightly Turbid
	Silver Creek	33.1	32.0	34.1	Stable	Moderate	Slightly Turbid
	Gooseberry River	33.2	32.4	34.0	Stable	Moderate	Turbid
	Split Rock River	33.2	32.4	34.8	Stable	Moderate	Slightly Turbid
	Beaver River	34.0	33.0	34.9	Stable	Moderate	Slightly Turbid
	Baptism River	33.1	32.8	33.4	Stable	Moderate	Clear
Upper Shore	Cross River	32.0	32.0	32.0	Stable	Moderate	Clear
	Temperance River	32.0	32.0	32.0	Stable	Moderate	Clear
	Poplar River	32.0	32.0	32.0	Stable	Moderate	Clear
	Cascade River	32.0	32.0	32.0	Stable	Moderate	Clear
	Devil Track River	32.0	32.0	32.0	Stable	Moderate	Clear
	Kadunce River	32.0	32.0	32.0	Stable	Moderate	Clear
	Brule River	32.0	32.0	32.0	Stable	Moderate	Clear

Smelt Reports (April 21, 2022): ***ARE THE SMELT RUNNING YET? NO***

River temps are at 32°F with lots of shelf ice still present on most rivers. The smelt run will be later than normal this spring as the forecast calls for continued cold conditions for one or more weeks. More information about smelt is provided on the [Smelt on the North Shore fact sheet](#) on the MN DNR Lake Superior Area Fisheries office website. Please be aware of the high levels of PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) discovered in Rainbow smelt in Lake Superior and understand the potential risks associated with the new [Rainbow Smelt consumption advisory](#).

French River Adult Trap Totals (Opening date TBD)

Knife River Adult Trap Catch Totals (April 11-21, 2022)

Steelhead Rainbow Trout: 6
 Kamloops Rainbow Trout: 0
 Brook Trout: 0