

Thunder Bay Walleye Club

Newsletter

October, 2009

P.O. Box 812 Alpena, MI 49707

Officers		Board of Directors
President	Jim Leeseberg	Bill O'Neil
Vice President	Dave Birmingham	Richard Hubert
Finance/Recording Secretary	Dennis Burns	Eric MacKenzie
		Kevin Cosbitt

NO MEETING OR NEWSLETTER IN NOVEMBER

Brown Trout

The following members worked at the Brown Trout Festival this summer and are awarded a membership for working more than 5 hours. Memberships have been updated.

Roger Barc, Dave Birmingham, Denny Burns, Erich Carlson, Martin Circulis, Darwin Grabow, Al Hess, Jim Hiske, Pam Hubert, Carl Kelly, Jim LeFluer, Charles Marcinkiewicz, Mike McGirr, Bill & Christine O'Neil, Harry Plume, Carl Renard, Wayne VanDyke. Thank to all who helped.

There is a Brown Trout meeting the preceding Monday of our meeting. Denny Burns will have an update on the progress of filling the 4 slots vacated this fall and any other info.

Denny Burns

** Club News **

- *Walleye Club jacket orders*
- If you are interested in getting a Walleye Club jacket, please give Steve Hubert a call @ 379-4614, so he can make it worthwhile to put orders together. It is really not a cost saver to order one jacket at a time. If you plan on getting one, call ahead, so he can plan for orders. Steve will have hats, t-shirts etc. at the monthly meetings for you to purchase. Christmas is coming.

Club Tournaments

Hubbard Lake, September 13th

We had a great turnout for this tournament and an awesome day for fishing. For most of the club members fishing, catching walleye was not a problem, but finding a legal fish was the tricky part, and finding fish in the 20 inch range was particularly tough. We did quite a bit of pre-fishing in the usual north and middle areas of the lake with little consistency and generally small fish. This year, for reasons known only to the fish, the walleye really seemed to be grouped up on the south end. At the end of the day, Wayne VanDyke, Erich Carlson, and Rich Carlson had the big basket of the day with 12.72 lbs and took **1st place**. Going through literally dozens of fish seemed to be the key as the better fish were simply mixed in with the smaller fish. We targeted a relatively small area on the south end focusing the bottom of the water column in 45-55' going through 30 or more legal sized fish. Gold and chartreuse spinners on bouncers and in-lines seemed to be the ticket. Taking **2nd place** with 11.7lbs was team PBR consisting Brian Matchett, Jim Watts, and A.J. Stibitz who were also fishing the south end pulling crawlers on gold and chartreuse spinners in 50-60' with 1 to 2oz in-line weights. Congrats to these guys on a beautiful Hubbard Lake monster weighing just under **5 ½ pounds**. In **3rd place** was Jon Kruttlin, Tim Somers, and the sleeper (no really, the sleeper) Seth Coffing. They also went through dozens of fish pulling spinners on the south end in 50-60'. Their set-up included primarily red and gold spinners, bottom bouncers and 1 to 2oz in-lines at various depths.

Grand Lake, September 27th

We wrapped up the TBWC season with a relatively nice day on Grand Lake. The little bit of pre-fishing that was done didn't reveal much useful information as very few if any legal fish came to net for most guys. I know we went through a dozen or more short fish and never caught a keeper, but someone always figures them out on tournament day, and team PBR did just that. In **1st place** with 9lbs 11oz were Brian Matchett, Mel Matchett, and Jim Watts, who exerted lots of patience to come up with the only five fish bag of the day. They worked a fairly small area between Three Sisters and the west shore of Grand Island, and once again pulled some good fish at the end of the day to take the top spot. The program consisted of small spinners in chartreuse and silver, and orange and gold behind 1oz in-lines and bouncers 15-24 feet back in 16-18 feet of water. **2nd place** went to the Dutch Eyes Crew of Wayne VanDyke, Erich Carlson, and Rich Carlson with a four fish weight of 7lbs 8oz. They focused on a small area between the east side of Grand Island and the east shore, pulling small chartreuse and gold and orange and gold spinners 15-20 feet behind ½ oz and 1oz in-lines. **3rd place** went to Jon Kruttlin, Eric Mackenzie, and Alec Britzke pulling three fish for a weight of 5lbs 7oz. They too focused on a small area between the east side of Grand Island and the east shore, pulling small chartreuse and gold and orange and gold spinners 15-20 feet behind ½ oz and 1oz in-lines.

******2009 in Review******

All in all, the club had another great tournament year, we gained some new members, and while it's time for the "off" season, I know fishing is never far from my mind. As serious and competitive as we sometimes get, myself definitely included, we should try and remember that we are all out to have fun, learn from each other, and enjoy the outdoors. Fishing in tournaments big or small is a great way to become a better fisherman. Even when you have a poor finish, you can almost always learn something from those that did well. Pay attention, ask questions, take notes, mental or real, and make it a learning experience. It might be a different presentation, speed, depth, temp, or location, but there is always something to pick up on. This season was an interesting one, and here are a few thoughts on the different bodies of water we fished.

We are all lucky to have **Thunder Bay** in our backyard. As frustrating as it can be at times, overall it is a fantastic resource. The T-Bay turned out some great fish this year, including an awesome ten plus pounder taken by Pam Hubert, and a couple of fish over nine pounds taken by Ed Cohoon and Erich Carlson during the Brown Trout Tournament as well. I don't care what system you're fishing in, those are just plain big fish. There always seems to be Walleyes biting somewhere from as soon as the ice is off until it ices back up in December. The mouth of the river is always one of the first areas, to be concentrated on, but then the fish move off to areas like the North Shore, the Grass Island reef, and *if* you can find the pockets of warm water the fish are usually there. This year the first good numbers of big fish showed up down toward South Point, and Black River Island (Survival Suits Recommended). Don't forget about the Lake Erie like combat conditions crawler harness bite off of Bayview Park and Blair Street in June, or the limit catches off the North Shore after dark in late July and early August. There continues to be great fishing in the bay even now, as most people, myself included are gearing up for hunting season. Find the bait, find the Walleyes. You just have to motivate yourself to get out there.

The infamous **Thunder Bay River** got the best of just about everyone who fished it during the tournament, even the two boats that actually caught (a) fish (Walleye). At least a few of us gave it a good honest walleye fisherman's try. There's no doubt that there can be and is some great fishing to be had at certain times, but the question is, is it really a body of water suited for our club tournaments? Maybe I'll go back when it ices up.

Long Lake has something against the TBWC. For the second year in a row, the weather was an absolute windy mess until later in the afternoon, at least there was no rain this year. There always seems to be some good fish taken in Long Lake and Brian Matchett made sure that this year was no exception with a five

plus pounder. Still, there were a few limits scrounged up on a tough bite, but still haven't seemed to hit this one just right.

Mullet Lake turned into a great bite. Although pre-fishing provided mixed results, tournament day produced some awesome fish and fishing for those who made the trip. Fish were caught on both cranks and spinners all over the lake. Along with walleye's there were Browns, Rainbows, Pike, Smallmouth, and of course pesky perch caught. I'm pretty sure I had a Musky or huge Pike hooked up, and also saw a Sturgeon Jump. It's a beautiful lake in a beautiful part of the state. If you didn't make the trip this year I would strongly recommend making the drive next time it's on the schedule. It's not really all the far!

Saginaw Bay can be a wicked witch, and it certainly was the Saturday before the tournament. We made a good move and went out of Tawas that morning which made our run back much easier. Being just a witch on Sunday the bay allowed most of us to run wherever our destinations were. There were still lots of fish out front and to the locales south, but the bigger fish followed their typical summer pattern of northern movement into deeper water. There's usually less fish as far as numbers go in the outer bay, but if you can find them, they're usually willing. They always seem to be on the move, so staying with them can be tricky.

Hubbard Lake was another of our usual stops. Over the last couple of years, one thing's changed, there's so many small fish small fish! Sure there are still some great walleyes in Hubbard, and lots of them, but the amount of small 9-12 inch fish is incredible. The tournament day on Hubbard was incredible, I know of at least three boats that went through 20 or more legal sized fish. Both crawlers and cranks got the job done, but this year the bigger fish showed a preference for the infamously tasty night crawler. I know a few guys told me they wouldn't even fish the tournament because they were catching fifteen to twenty short fish to get one or two legal size walleyes. I personally don't like the idea of bringing these small fish up in forty or fifty feet of water and seeing their stomach come out their mouth knowing full well that they legally need to be returned to the water and will not recover.

Grand Lake was as always, a tough bite. No matter what it seems that you have to work your tail off to catch your five fish. Remember there are some big Walleyes in Grand. Matchett and Watts had a hawg of a Walleye grab a hold of an 11 incher that they were bringing to the boat and if they were ready, might have been able to net it. So how do we target those bigger fish? Nobody has figured that one out yet. Sub-legal Walleyes aren't legal for bait or I'd probably try them!

*****Paxton Quarry Results*****

On September 19th the Paxton Quarry was open to the bass and walleye club members for a fun fishing tournament/survey. Bob reported that there were over one hundred fish caught during the outing. Four boats from the walleye club made the event along with a dozen or so bass boats. The majority of the fish landed were bass up to 20 inches, along with four Walleye from 18-20 inches, and a few Perch up to 12 inches. He mentioned that they had hoped for a better turnout, but everyone there was very well fed and fun was had by all that attended. All fish were happily released.

****Angler of the Year Update****

After pulling off three wins out of the last four tournaments, Erich Carlson with the help of his partner Wayne VanDyke came from way behind to claim the Angler of the Year title. Larry Donajkowski, and Wayne VanDyke were still in the running when it came down to Grand Lake where Larry could've sealed the deal with a win, or Erich and Wayne finishing with an 83% or higher would've resulted in Erich and

Wayne repeating as Co-Anglers of the Year, however they were only able to squeak out 76% on a tough bite. That was quite a finish. Nice job everyone!

Upcoming Activities –

- Reel Fun Ice Fishing Tourney on Grand Lake

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Doug Ellenger & Ted Kruttlin both of Harrisville

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 at 7:00 pm

- **Besser Tech Room** - Room 112 in the BTC

Meetings are the second Wednesday of every month

AGENDA:

- Old Business
 - Brown trout ideas/status
- New Business
 - Club Web Page- Try and use it.
 - Grand Lake Ice Fishing Tournament- Raffle Ideas?
 - Paxton Quarry survey results
 - Angler of the Year standings
 - Broken Tournament Scale
 - Final Best of Five Standings will be available