

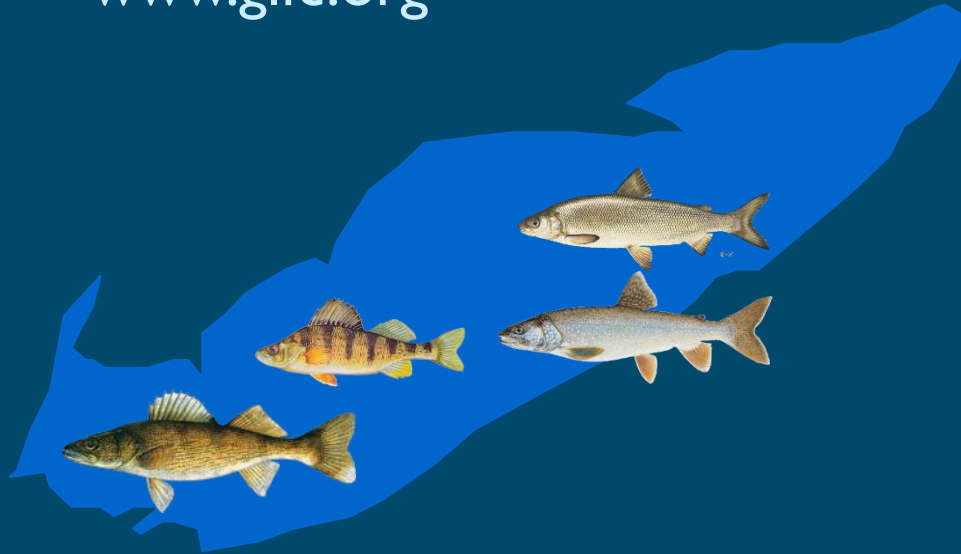
A History of Cooperative Lake Erie Fisheries Management



www.glfc.org

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Huron Pier, Nov. 25, 2017

“We do not, however, expect that Walleyes will again become as abundant as they were in the early 1950s...” (Regier et al. 1969)

Large (9-10 lb) walleye, commonly caught ~1900, now rare (1942)

(Doan 1944)

During 1942-1961

- Strong hatches last 2-3 years***
- Weak hatches last a year***
- Few females reach maturity***

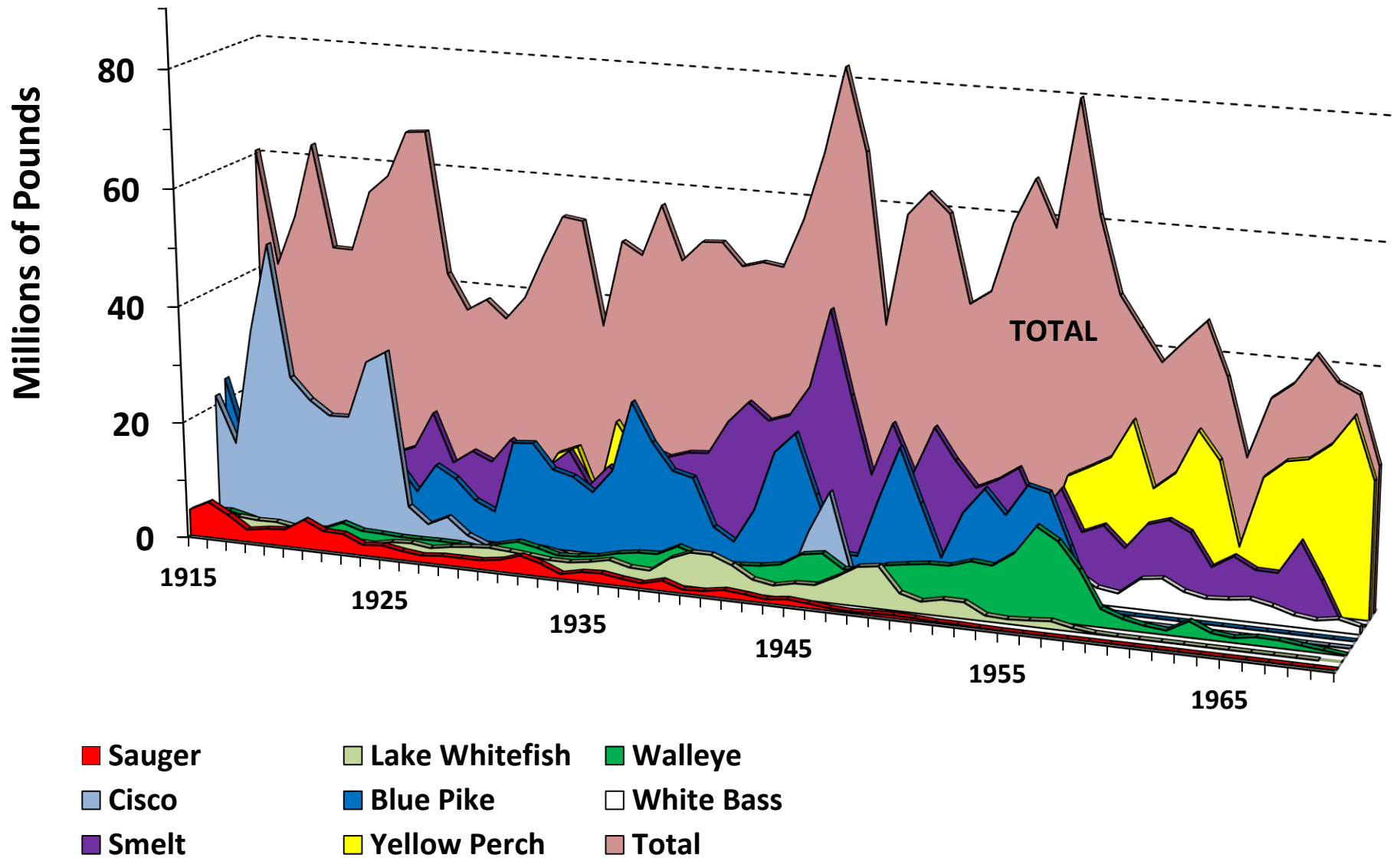
(Parsons 1970)

During 1963-1968

- Fisheries annually removed 84% of the population***

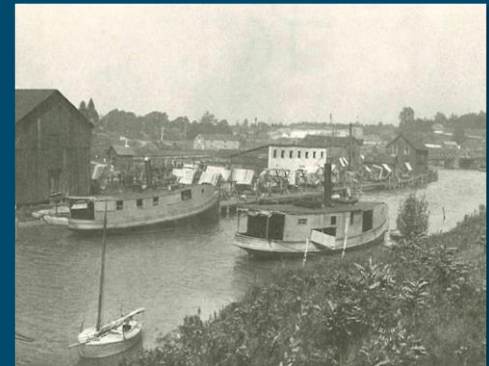
(Kutkuhn et al. 1976)

Annual Commercial Yields in Lake Erie 1915-1970



Key Characteristics of Historical Commercial Fisheries in Lake Erie

- Heavily capitalized during 20th century
- Highly-valued industry, prominent members of society
- Adaptable (gears, technology, fish behavior)
- Targeted abundant, high-value, species
- Belief that fish populations can't be over-fished
- Fishery management varied among jurisdictions



1883

First Great Lakes
Interstate Conference
13 recommendations
agreed upon;
none adopted.

1884

Second Great Lakes
Interstate Conference
Same issues as first
conference; same result.

1891

International
Fish and Game
Conference
Nothing came of several
resolutions produced.

1892

JOINT COMMISSION
Advised uniform regulations,
a joint management plan,
and a permanent interna-
tional body with regulatory
authority. Recommendations
not widely appreciated.

1896

Interstate committee of IL,
MI, MN, and WI
Met to draw up a code of
uniform regulations. No
printed record of results.

1897

American Fisheries Society
annual meeting
Stressed need for uniform
regulations. Nothing came of
the meeting.

1897

**INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION**
Recommended a treaty and
permanent joint commission
to supervise the fisheries,
review science, and
promulgate regulations.
No treaty proposed
immediately.

1904

Conference of State Officials
Recommendations to state legis-
latures for uniform regulations.
"Nothing accomplished."

1906

American Fisheries Society
annual meeting
No record.

1908

TREATY
Agreement concerning the
fisheries of all waters between
Canada and the U.S.
Established a permanent
international commission.
Failed to pass Congress
and was withdrawn in 1914.

1910

**INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION**
Commission formed to
investigate border issues,
including Great Lakes fishery
management.
Same recommendations of the
1897 commission; same results.

1927

Lake Erie International
Conservation Council
Council formed to coordinate
action on Lake Erie. Resolutions
adopted but no future meetings
occurred.

1928

International Fisheries
Conservation Council
of the Great Lakes
Met twice in 1928. Agreements
on general measures for the
Great Lakes fishery. "Nothing
definite was achieved and the
conference was soon forgotten."

1929

Meeting of Michigan and Ontario
on Lake Huron
Effort to form a code of uniform
regulations. No action by either
government.

1931

Conference of Lake Erie jurisdictions
Resulted in the formation of the Lake Erie Advisory
Committee and the Toronto Agreement of 1933.

1933

Toronto Agreement signed by each of the
jurisdictions on Lake Erie
Agreement covered all vital regulations on Lake
Erie. However, implementation was a disaster.

1933

Meeting of IN, IL, MI, WI, and the U.S. Bureau of
Commercial Fisheries
Attempt to draw up uniform regulations for Lake
Michigan; measures failed to be enacted.

1936

Meeting in Washington
Attempt to resurrect the Lake Erie Advisory
Committee

1936

Meeting in Chicago among IN, IL, MI, MN, OH,
WI and U.S. Federal Government
A few regulations for Lakes Huron and Superior
were enacted by IL and MI.

1936

Meeting in Toronto between MI and ON
Tentative agreement was reached on u
regulations for Lake Huron, but held in

1938

Council of State Governments Meeting
Resulted in formation of International B
of Enquiry.

1938

Midwest Regional Assembly
Goal to develop uniform regulations
for Lake Michigan. Nothing accomplished.

1938

INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF ENQUIRY
Formed to investigate fishing practices and
government regulations.

1942

Board of Enquiry Report
Rejected interstate
compact;
recommended treaty.

1943

Interstate conference,
Madison, WI
Established Lake Trout
Committee.

1946

TREATY
Created bi-national
committee to make
regulations, subject to
federal approval. Not
ratified; withdrawn.

Infringements on
management rights



CONVENTION 1954

Great Lakes Fishery Commission formed

Major Duties:

1. Sea lamprey control
2. Science
3. Working arrangements

ARTICLE X

Nothing in this Convention shall be construed as preventing any of the States of the United States of America bordering on the Great Lakes or, subject to their constitutional arrangements, Canada or the Province of Ontario from making or enforcing laws or regulations within their respective jurisdictions relative to the fisheries of the Great Lakes so far as such laws or regulations do not preclude the carrying out of the Commission's duties.

Article X (paraphrased):

Nothing in this Convention prevents the states and Ontario from making or enforcing their own fishery regulations.

GLFC Lake Committees, est. 1965

A map of the Great Lakes region is shown in a dark blue silhouette against a lighter blue background. Five white rounded rectangular boxes with black borders are placed around the map, each containing the name of a lake committee. A central white rectangular box with a black border contains the text 'Senior "lake managers" States, Ontario, tribes'.

Lake
Superior
Committee

Lake
Huron
Committee

Lake
Ontario
Committee

Lake
Michigan
Committee

**Senior “lake managers”
States, Ontario, tribes**

Lake
Erie
Committee

GREAT LAKES FISHERY MANAGEMENT

- Sustain fish stocks
- Protect diversity
- Balance predator/prey
- Manage → best information
- Balance constituent needs



JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

1981, 1997

- **Non-binding**
- **Non-regulatory**
- **Collective action**

**FOCUS ON
RELATIONSHIPS**



JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

1981, 1997

common goal.....

To **secure fish communities**, based on foundations of **stable self-sustaining stocks**, supplemented by judicious **plantings of hatchery-reared fish**, and provide from these communities an optimum contribution of fish, fishing opportunities, and **associated benefits** to meet needs identified by society for wholesome food, recreation, cultural heritage, employment & income, and a **healthy aquatic ecosystem**.

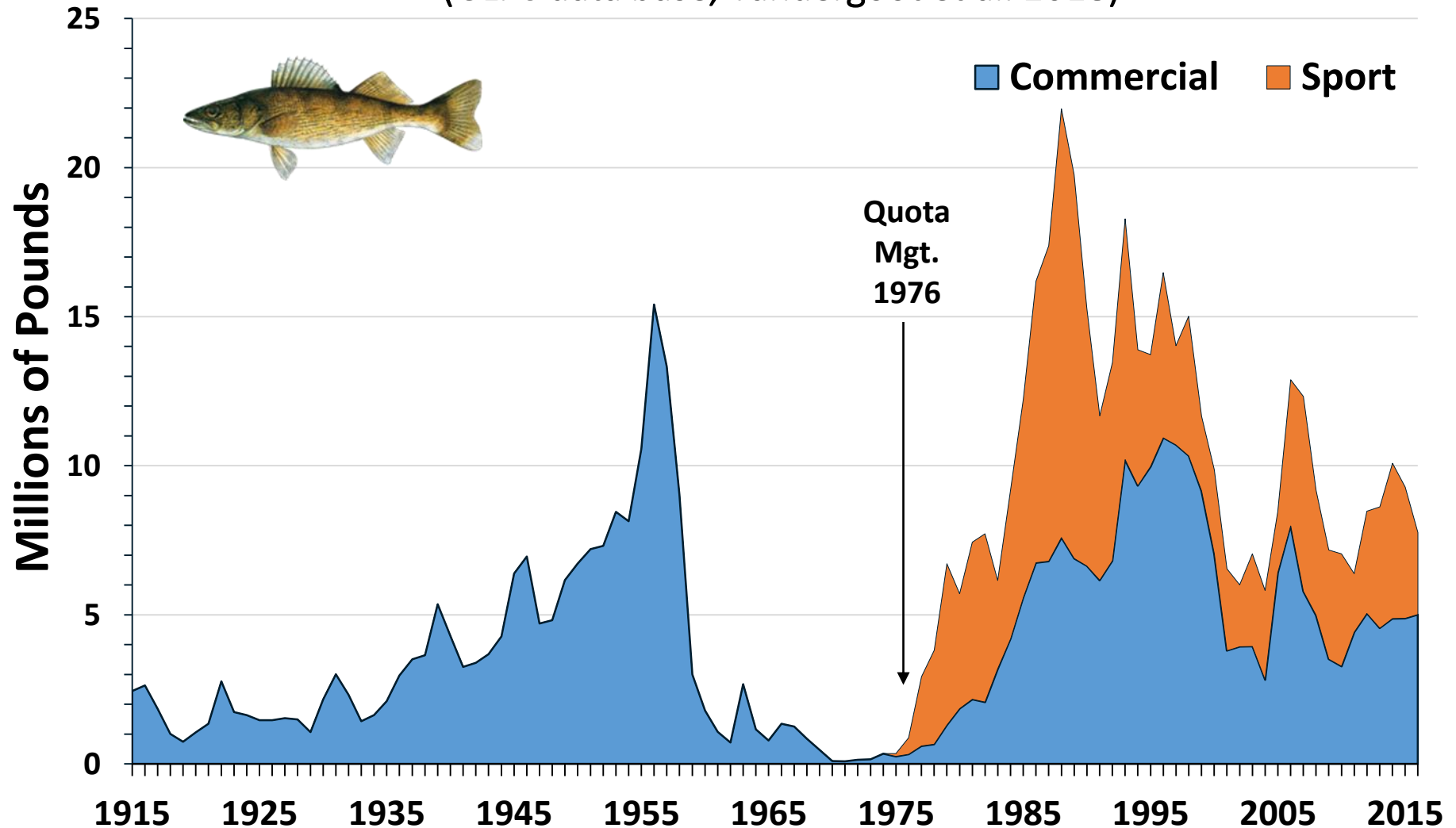
strategies for cooperative fishery mgt.....

Consensus
Accountability
Information Sharing
Ecosystem Management



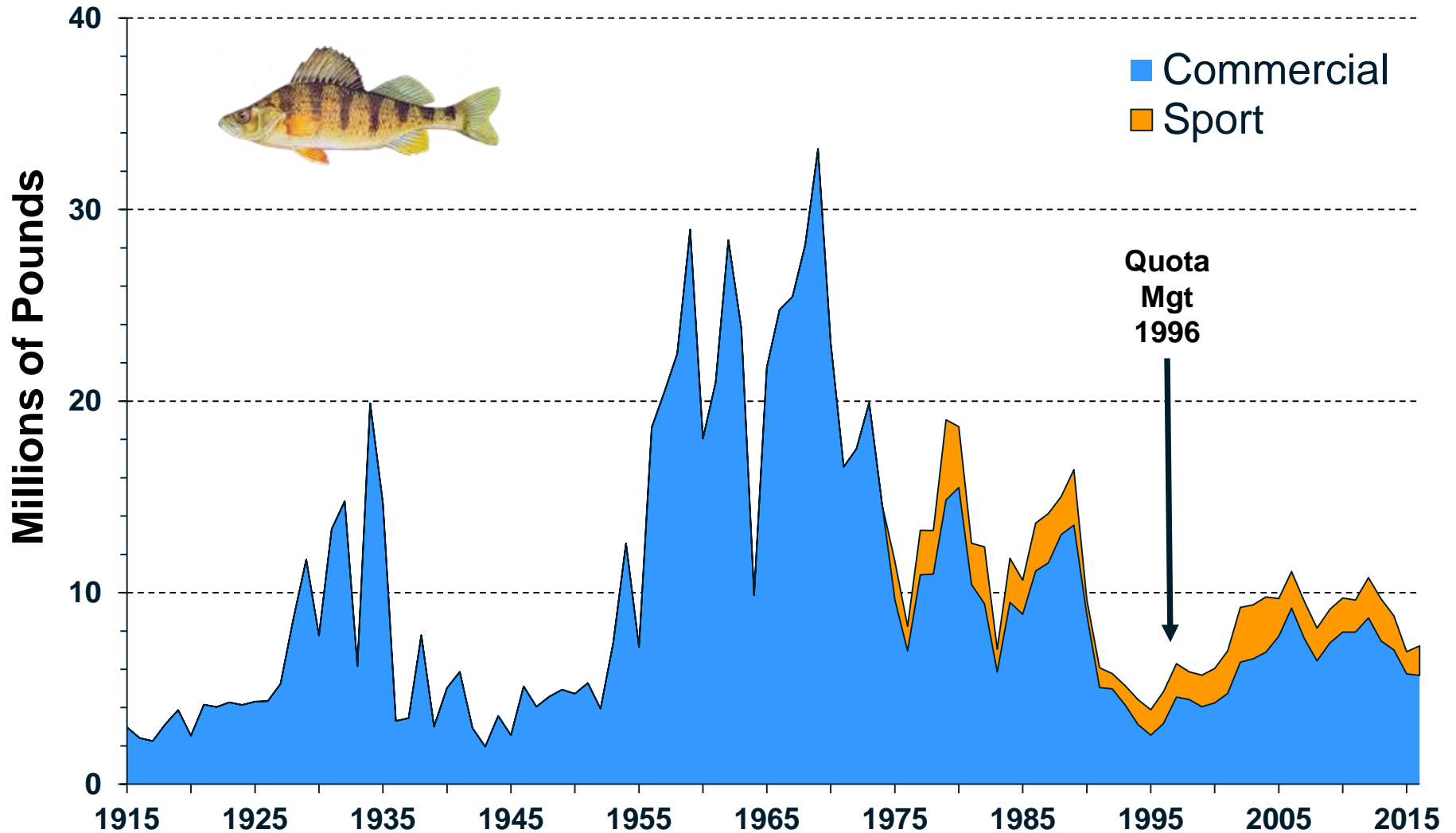
Annual Fishery Yield of Lake Erie Walleye 1915-2016

(GLFC data base, Vandergoot et al. 2018)



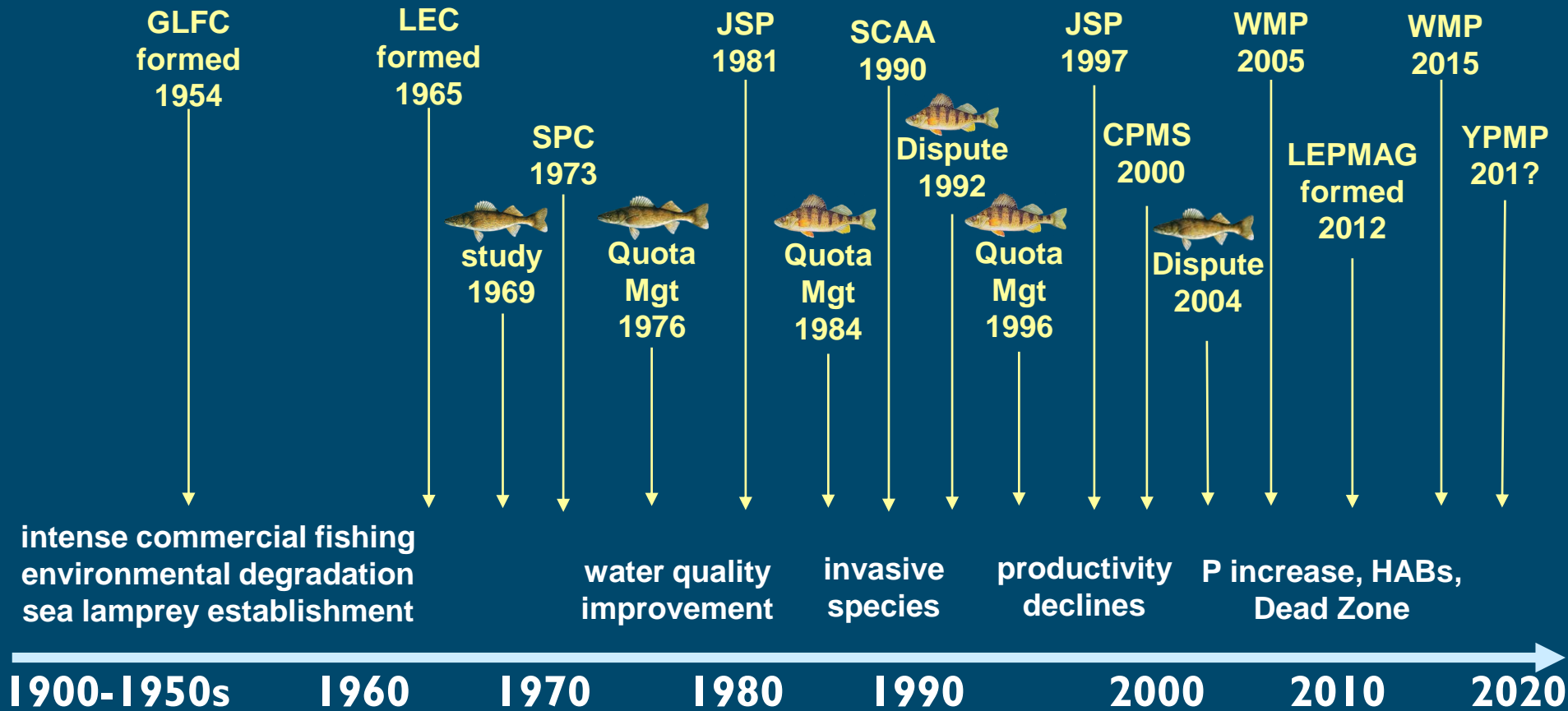
Annual Fishery Yield of Lake Erie Yellow Perch 1915-2016

(GLFC database, YPTG 2017)



Interagency Fisheries Management Milestones

Lake Erie Committee/GLFC



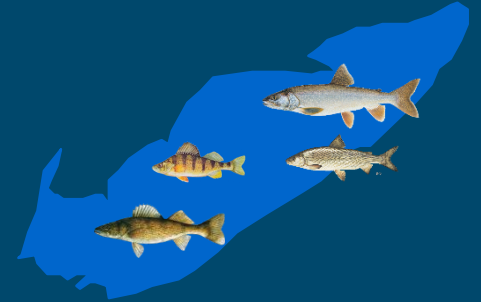
Other notable LEC/GLFC achievements (www.glfc.org)



- **Lake Trout Restoration Plan 1985, 2008**
- **Fish Community Objectives 2003**
- **Environmental Objectives 2005**
- **State of the Lake Reports (2005, 2009, 2015)**

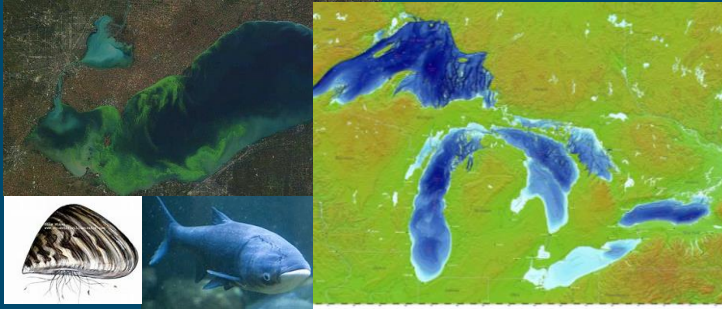
SUMMARY

- **Historically, fishing adversely affected Lake Erie fish stocks**
 - 30-80 million lbs harvested annually
 - Extirpated: Lake Trout, Cisco, Blue-Pike, Sauger
 - Survivors: Lake Whitefish, Walleye, Yellow Perch (others)
 - Commercial fisheries were primary drivers
 - Habitat loss limited fish production
- **Cooperative inter-jurisdictional fisheries management**
 - Non-existent prior to mid-1960s
 - Lake committees 1965
 - Successful walleye recovery in Lake Erie
 - Sustainable fisheries management
- **Elements of Success**
 - Common agenda
 - Investment in shared science
 - Continuous communication
 - Trust and relationships
 - Backbone support

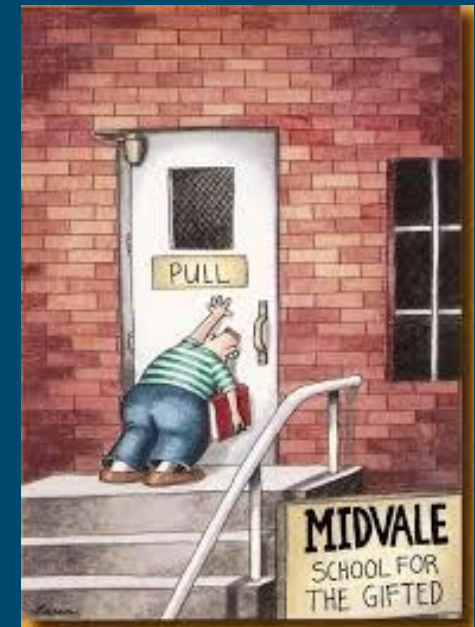


Challenges

- Environmental game-changers



- Departure from the JSP
- Communication



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QUESTIONS?