



TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League
May 2021

www.breckenridgeikes.org



Izaak Walton League Must Support Non-Game Native Fish Regulatory Reform

By Tyler Winter

Breckenridge Chapter IWLA member

The mission of the Izaak Walton League is to conserve, restore and promote the sustainable use of our natural resources. Unfortunately, I need to make you aware of an issue that contradicts all three of those goals: the unrestricted harvest and wanton waste of our native non-game fish. For too long, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has ignored its mission to conserve and manage ALL of our native fish.

In 2019, Alec Lackmann published a study in the *Journal Communications Biology* showing that bigmouth buffalo (*Ictiobus cyprinellus*) in Minnesota can live at least 112 years and reproduce infrequently. This raised alarm among native fish conservationists because there are NO LIMITS to the harvest of bigmouth buffalo in Minnesota. The discovery of 100-year-old bigmouth buffalo highlights how little we know about most non-game native fish.

There are at least 30 species of native fish managed as “rough fish” by the Minnesota DNR. This includes widely divergent species such as bowfin (*Amia calva*), lake herring (*Coregonus artedii*) and the threatened black buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*).

In the old food chain paradigm, fish production was a zero-sum game. The assumption was that if you removed one fish you would get more of another. This led to the widespread denigration of non-game native fish. People started referring to them as “trash fish” - accusing them of “ruining the lake”, “eating walleye eggs” and “preying on game fish”.

The science of ecology now rejects simplistic food chains in favor of the more wholistic “food web”. We now understand that healthy intact ecosystems have many species, with many complex interactions. Removing any native species is much more likely to disrupt the ecosystem than increase the number of “game fish.” It is important to note that healthy, intact and species-rich ecosystems are less susceptible to invasive species. For example, many species of redhorse and bigmouth buffalo prey on zebra mussels. Bowfin and gar are effective predators on invasive common carp fingerlings. The same native species, which were maligned as “rough fish”, are in fact vital to a healthy and resilient ecosystem.

Historically, non-game fish were commercially important, but of little interest to sport fishers. But, over the last two decades, the Minnesota DNR has extended bowfishing seasons and allowed the use of lights for shooting fish at night. At the same time, there has been no reduction in daily limits and inadequate protection for “endangered”, “threatened”, and “special concern” species, such as the “threatened” Black Buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*) or “special concern” species: Blue Sucker (*Cycleptus elongatus*) and Black Redhorse (*Moxostoma duquesnei*). In fact, the “limit” for ALL species of buffalo is “no limit”. People who harvest bigmouth buffalo and other native non-game fish are not even limited by the number of fish they can use. The harvested fish are routinely “disposed” of. This practice is so common that bowfishing tournaments advertise “free disposal” of fish taken during the tournament. In some cases, “free disposal” takes the form of a dumpster.

Despite the liberalized harvest methods and extended seasons, the Minnesota DNR has collected almost no data about non-game native fish harvest.

In 2019 the DNR did collect data from two bowfishing tournaments. The results were startling. Over 75% of the fish harvested were native species. Bowfishing teams averaged one fish every 2-3 minutes during the 10 hours of each tournament.

Unfortunately, bowfishing and bowfishing tournament sponsors say they don't need ANY permits, so we have no way to estimate the state-wide harvest.



Fig 1. A dumpster of fish after a bowfishing tournament. For some bowfishers, the only limit they honor is the number of fish their boat can carry.

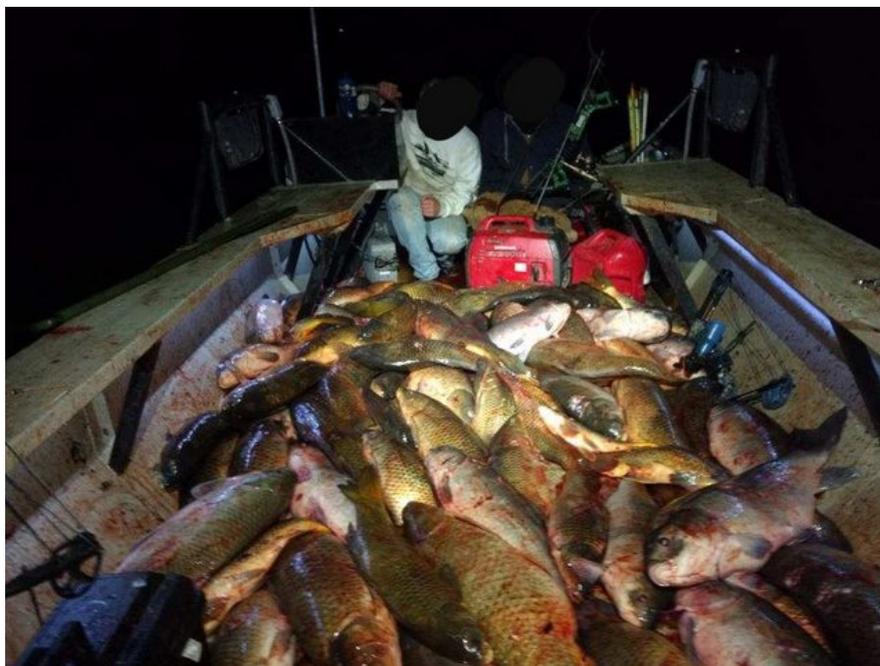


Fig 2. A boat with an estimated 1,000 pounds of bigmouth buffalo.

But, bowfishers are not the only group that threatens native fish. I routinely speak with anglers who “dispose” of native fish. Usually, they have misidentified the fish as a carp because they didn't

know other non-game fish existed. This is no surprise when you consider the fishing regulations use the label “rough fish” to describe both native fish and non-native carp. Updated fishing

regulations has obvious practical effects, but also informs people these fish exist at all! Once people are aware, they are usually able to appreciate and respectfully use the resource.



Fig. 3. Two children appreciating a shorthead redhorse they caught.

It is past time for the Minnesota DNR to enforce basic regulations for non-game fish. First and foremost, we need enforcement of the existing wanton waste statute. No native fish, which belongs to all of us, should be thrown in a manure pile as “fertilizer”. Second, endangered, threatened, and

special concern species must be adequately protected from harvest.

The DNR must update their regulations to establish daily limits to protect non-game native fish from excessive harvest and require sponsors of rough fishing tournaments to collect data on both the fish and bowfishers.

Some people will undoubtedly object to these changes. They will find it inconvenient to identify and count fish they are used to killing causally. They will raise specious objections, or claim these issues require scientific study. Ethical behavior does not require, and is not justified by, scientific study. Ethics are what separate hunters, anglers and conservationists from poachers and bystanders. On one level, these changes are about native fish and the health of our ecosystem. On another level they are about us. Do we believe in respecting the resource, taking only what you can use, and fair chase? Do we insist the DNR enforce the law and update their regulations? Or, do we sit by while “sportsmen” fill dumpsters with 100-year-old bigmouth buffalo?

Therefore, the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America must support the adoption of Minnesota fishing regulations that adequately protect all native fish, including fish that are legally designated as native “rough fish.” These regulations should include fishing limits, clarification of protection for “listed” species, along with enforcement of wanton waste laws.

No Mow May

No Mow May is a conservation initiative first popularized by Plantlife, an organization based in the United Kingdom, but which is gaining traction across North America. The goal of No Mow May is to allow grass to grow unmown for the month of May, creating habitat and forage for early season pollinators.



Minutes - Breckenridge Chapter IWLA BOD meeting April 14, 2021

ZOOM meeting members present: Steve Schaust, Larry Kennebeck, Dick Brown, Tim Johnson, Barb Franklin, Wendy Steele, Jerry Steele, Karen Ostenso, Jim Arnold, Joe Klohs, Dennis Leslie. Larry stated the IWL Membership pledge.

Upcoming Events:

- April 22, 2021 EARTH DAY – Water Legacy at Noon (?) at Governor’s Manson. Lots of activities to be involved in on Earth Day around our communities to be engaged in the great outdoors around our state.
- April 29, 2021 (Thursday) IWL State Division Meeting to review Resolutions – Zoom meeting 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Dick, Tim, Larry, Jerry, Jim and possibly Steve as our delegates.
- May 1, 2021 (Saturday) IWL Annual Convention – Zoom meeting 9:00 to 11:30 am. Resolutions to be voted on.

Next month (May) our board meeting will be “in person”, as all board members will have been vaccinated.

There was a brief overview of committees:

Jim: Scholarship committee/Treasurer’s report (temporarily)

Dick: Speakers for member meetings

Tim: Building rentals/grounds (?)

Barb: Newsletter/webmaster

Memorial bench w/plaques, Buckthorn, EAB problem... There are more committees than we have people.

We need more communication, have drafted plans and report to Board.

There was extensive discussion about the Emerald Ash Borer infestation on the property, and the following motions were adopted:

MOTION #1 – Ask Jim to get a quote from Tom Reid on two large Ash trees next to our South property line. Motion passed.

MOTION #2 – Ask Jim to get a quote from Tom Reid on taking down the large Ash trees along the driveway which might be candidates for insecticide injections. Motion passed.

MOTION #3 – Move forward with volunteers felling more small EAB infested trees near the entrance and haul the logs to Ceres in Dick’s trailer. Motion passed.

MOTION #4 – OK for volunteers to fell apparently uninfested small Ash trees elsewhere and allow to decay on forest floor or cut up for firewood. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s report reviewed – donation received to honor Erika Sitz. New treasurer, Sue Schmidt, is planning to join our next board meeting, on May 11 or May 12. *Request to have Tuesday board meetings vs. Wednesday evenings as we resume in person at Chapter House.

Memorial Bench that will last for many years with space for many metal plates engraved with names of honored members, overlooking river or possibly kiosk inside building. Also, bench in memory of Louis Dinzl needs touching up with sandblaster and paint.

Rentals: Three weekends in June are rented. Expecting to have a full season as the pandemic becomes more under control.

In person Social/Ed meetings may start up later this summer. Garlic mustard can be pulled now – best when earth is wet. Tim checking date when last pulled (probably first two weeks of May are best).

The National IWL recommends that we take over a section of Highway cleanup. MNDOT told us that someone else was doing it and that we have to apply again. *To be discussed at a later date.

Jerry to mount fire extinguishers this week or next week.

Hey, we really lichen you!

Thanks to Larry Kennebeck for sharing visits to our Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas



Did you know? There are tens of thousands of different species of lichen, but there are three main categories of lichen: foliose, fruticose, and crustose.

Foliose lichens are usually flat and are almost like layers of lettuce, or sheets of paper in a “folio.”

Fruticose lichens are very 3D and almost “fruit like,” with a variety of branching, bushy knobs and structures that extend out from where the lichen attaches.

Crustose lichens are just a thin “crust” over a surface, almost like someone just sprayed a small spot of colorful spray-paint.



Congratulations!

Mike Maher, Director of Springbrook Nature Center, has been promoted to Director of Community Services (Parks and Recreation/Nature Center effective May 22. Tara Rogness will be assuming his duties at Springbrook as Nature Center Manager. While Mike's office will now be at City Hall, he fully expects that he will make his way back and you'll find him walking the trails or using the leaf blower when his stress levels are too high.

Congratulations to both Mike and Tara!



Champlin Garden Club



Spring Plant Sale

Sat. May 8th, 2021

8:00 am - 3:00 pm

**Willy McCoy's Parking Lot
Hwy 169 & Hayden Lake Rd**

Annuals, Perennials, and Herbs

Pollinators love that our plants are from local reputable nurseries that do not use neonicotinoids!

Cash, Checks or Cards Accepted

Come and support this local group that supports the planting at Doris Kemp Park, the Champlin cemetery and the horticulture programs at both CBPA and Champlin Park High School.

If you are interested in joining our group, please contact us on our Facebook page. We would be happy to have you!

**Interested in wildlife and the outdoors?
Please Join Us!
IWLA Breckenridge Chapter Membership Application:**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Dues are subject to change. Please make check payable to: IWLA, Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter Membership

Dues: Individual: \$71.50 Family: \$99.00 Student: \$43.00

Mail to:

Mary Ellen Vetter

7715 York Lane N

Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

Phone: 763-561-1761

Chapter House Rental Rates

Non-Members:

(damage deposit: \$300.00; \$200 for previous renters)

Monday through Thursday\$275.00

Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays\$350.00

Members:(damage deposit \$100.00)

Monday through Thursday\$125.00

Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays\$175.00

Boy Scouts:(damage deposit \$50.00)

Overnights.....\$50.00*

Rates and terms subject to change without notice; please contact the Chapter for special circumstances.

Rental Chairperson: Tim Johnson

**W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America
8816 West River Road
Brooklyn Park MN 55444**



**If you would like to submit an article for the Timberlines,
please send it to**

Barbara Franklin at: bbfrankli@gmail.com

Deadline is the last day of each month.

All articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Breckenridge Board of Directors. The Editor reserves the right to edit material as necessary.

Legislative Action

On April 27 I Zoomed into a program from Land Stewardship Project (LSP). It promoted their soil health initiative and encouraged contacting legislators. LSP focuses on sustainable and regenerative farming and does educational programs for farmers. They are active in legislative issues such as supporting beginning farmers and minority farmers. They provide food for schools and CSAs.

At the recent event several farmers described their progress in converting to new practices such as no-till and cover crops. They all emphasized the need for state funding to enable more farmers to transition to environmentally friendly methods.

LSP is asking for \$11.3 million from the state legislature to reach a goal of 30 percent of Minnesota's farm land using healthy soil processes by 2030. On May 3 a petition with 2600 signatures will be delivered to state officers and debate in

conference committees will begin. Kent Eken is chief author in the Senate as is Todd Lippert in the House.

To maximize the number of calls being made to the ag committee, phone numbers for 2 of the members were put on our screens, along with a suggested script to be used when calling. The presenters then paused for several minutes so we could all call and leave messages. It seemed a wonderfully efficient way to get as many calls sent as possible. I was also impressed with the number of women on the call, most of whom were farmers. Of the 4 farmers who spoke, 3 were women. One was only 19 years old! And the entire meeting was less than

Karen Ostenso