

**COMMERCIAL FISH PRODUCTION IN  
THE GREAT LAKES 1867-2015  
NOTES ON STATISTICS**

The report and supplement of the International Board of Inquiry for the Great Lakes Fisheries (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943) is the source for production statistics up to and including 1940.

Sources of production data for the period 1941-1977 were

1. Fishery Statistics of the United States. Published annually by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries prior to 1968. Thereafter, the National Marine Fishery Service, Department of Commerce, assumed responsibility for publishing Great Lakes harvest data tabulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2. Tabulations of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Biological Laboratory (then the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Great Lakes Fishery Laboratory), Ann Arbor, Michigan.
3. Annual Reports of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and detailed tabulations of its Fish and Wildlife Division.
4. The Canadian Commercial Fisheries of the Great Lakes--Basebook on Fishery Statistics No. 2, Markets and Economics Service, Department of Fisheries of Canada. 1955.
5. New York State Annual Reports.
6. Previously unpublished data, which separates historical Lake Superior chub catches from those of Cisco (formerly Lake Herring). (Compiled by Ralph Hile and Stanford H. Smith, both formerly of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.)

Sources of production data for the period 1978-1999 were

7. U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Science Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
8. Annual Reports of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.
9. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission.
10. State of Minnesota.
11. Fisheries Department, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewas.
12. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Sources of production data for the period 2000-2015 were

13. U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Science Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
14. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.
15. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission.
16. Natural Resources Department, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewas.

Where production figures differed, preference was given to the statistics collected by the same agency over the greatest number of consecutive years. By consulting more than one source, it was also possible to correct or reduce the extent of certain obvious errors in both published and unpublished statistics to obtain the most reliable record from the available data. For example, Chaumont Bay catches found to be missing from previously reported Lake Ontario catches

(1913, 1918, 1951) have been included in this report, after comparison with New York Annual Reports.

As in the original Technical Report No. 3, production tables for Rock Bass in Lake Ontario and Lake Trout in Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie have been omitted because the small catches shown for these species in early years have long since ceased to be significant. Tables have been added to show the increasing production of Pacific salmon and White Perch since 1960, as well as that of Rainbow Smelt and Alewife, which were first described in the 1962 edition.

In the original Technical Report No. 3, it became possible to identify production from certain areas of Lakes Huron (Saginaw Bay, Georgian Bay, and the North Channel) and Michigan (Green Bay). However, Green Bay production is not distinguishable from Lake Michigan totals prior to 1953.

Production amounts in each jurisdiction in a lake were rounded to the nearest thousand pounds after sums were calculated. (The sum of rounded amounts from the various jurisdictions will not necessarily correspond to the rounded total for the entire lake.) A blank indicates no catch report. A lake total for the species in question is not computed when the lack of a catch report is assumed attributable to zero catch. Note that Lake Superior production in Michigan during 1985-2015 and in Wisconsin during 1980-2015 includes harvests by tribal fishers from the 1842 treaty-ceded waters (state of Michigan; Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission) and from the waters around the Apostle Islands (state of Wisconsin; Natural Resources Department, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewas) whereas harvests by tribal fishers from these two areas are not included in tabulations of the Great Lakes Science Center (<https://www.sciencebase.gov/catalog/item/57769db6e4b07dd077c8763cd>). Also note that production amounts do not include fish categorized as “returned to water” in the Center’s data file. Missing data:

Confusion as to fish names and the combining of catches of species that are in the same market category or that resemble each other introduced considerable uncertainty into the statistics for many of the early years. For example, Round Whitefish and species of large chubs were included with Lake Whitefish, and small chubs were included with Cisco (formerly Lake Herring). Northern Pike, Sauger, Blue Pike, and Walleye have been variously combined and catches of Channel Catfish and various bullheads were combined rather consistently for many years. These instances, where known, are noted in the tables. Distinction between species that resemble each other closely, e.g. Yellow and Brown Bullhead, or the various species of chubs and suckers, is still not practical. Species and species groups for which catch statistics are given follow. They are arranged in phylogenetic order here, but in the catch tables they are listed alphabetically by common name.

Lake Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>
Bowfin	<i>Amia calva</i>
Alewife	<i>Alosa pseudoharengus</i>
Gizzard Shad	<i>Dorosoma cepedianum</i>

Chubs or deepwater ciscoes	<i>Coregonus</i> spp.
Cisco (formerly Lake Herring)	<i>Coregonus artedii</i>
Lake Whitefish	<i>Coregonus clupeaformis</i>
Round Whitefish or Menominee	<i>Prosopium cylindraceum</i>
Lake Trout	<i>Salvelinus namaycush</i>
Pacific salmon	<i>Onchorhynchus</i> spp.
Pink Salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus gorbuscha</i>
Coho Salmon	<i>Onchorhynchus kisutch</i>
Chinook Salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>
Rainbow Smelt	<i>Osmerus mordax</i>
Northern Pike	<i>Esox lucius</i>
Goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus</i>
Carp	<i>Cypyrinus carpio</i>
Minnnows	Cyprinidae
Suckers	<i>Catostomus</i> and <i>Moxastoma</i> spp.
Buffalo	<i>Ictiobus</i> spp.
Quillback	<i>Carpiodes cyprinus</i>
Bullheads	<i>Ictalurus</i> spp.
Channel Catfish	<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i>
American Eel	<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>
Burbot	<i>Lota lota</i>
White Perch	<i>Morone americana</i>
White Bass	<i>Morone chrysops</i>
Rock Bass	<i>Ambloplites rupestris</i>
Sunfish	<i>Lepomis</i> spp.
Smallmouth Bass	<i>Micropterus dolomieu</i>
Crappie	<i>Pomoxis</i> spp.
Yellow Perch	<i>Perca flavescens</i>
Sauger	<i>Sander canadensis</i>
Walleye	<i>Sander vitreus</i>

Blue Pike

Freshwater Drum or sheepshead

*Sander vitreus glaucum*

*Aplodinotus grunniens*