

Restoring Lake Trout and Native Species

What happened?

Native species in the Great Lakes region suffered due to **overfishing**, **invasive species** and **habitat degradation**. Commercial and recreational fishing was seriously impacted.

Species affected include lake trout, lake whitefish, lake sturgeon, yellow perch, brook trout and mussels.

What are we doing about it?

The Service is restoring self-sustaining native populations to maintain diversity, provide recreation and meet tribal community needs.

To improve native fisheries we:

- Grow and stock millions of lake trout annually, control sea lamprey and work with partners to manage harvest.

- Have established self-sustaining populations of lake trout in Lake Superior. Lake Huron shows big improvement.
- Monitor commercially and recreationally important fish stocks.
- Restore lake, pallid and shovelnose sturgeon (Great Lakes, Missouri and Mississippi rivers) and brook trout (Lake Superior) through habitat protection and hatchery propagation.
- Grow and release native mussels. 70% of the nation's 300 native mussel species are endangered or threatened.
- Increase our effectiveness by working with our many partners.



Spawning Assessment



Biologists measure a lake sturgeon captured during spawning assessment work. Sturgeon once ranged throughout the Great Lakes. Vulnerable to overfishing due to their slow reproductive cycle, a female requires 20+ years to mature. It spawns every four to six years during its 50-year lifespan.

Lake Trout



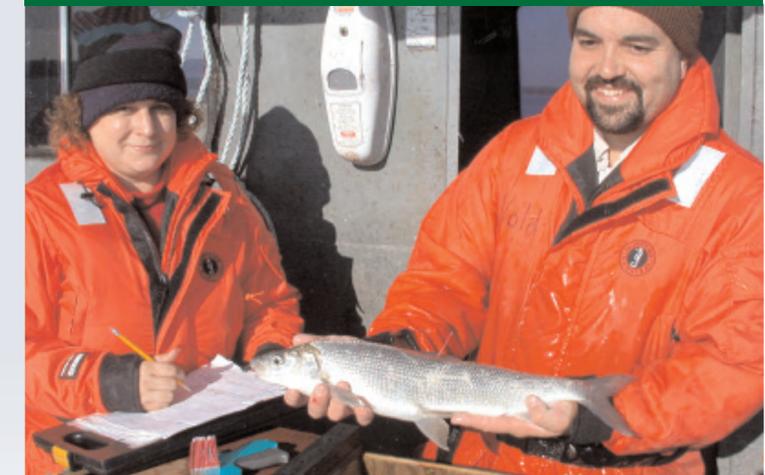
Each year, the Service's hatcheries produce millions of lake trout for spring stocking. The long-term goal is to build self-sustaining lake trout populations. Lake trout are the keystone predator in the Great Lakes fishery. Restoring their populations is a Service priority.

Monitoring Surveys



A biologist collects coaster brook trout during a survey. Monitoring distribution and abundance of native species is key to the Service's mission. Brook trout often move out of streams and into the estuaries and bays of the Great Lakes. Brook trout that move into such areas are called coasters.

Lake Whitefish



Biologists tag and release lake whitefish as part of a lakewide Lake Huron movement study. Lake whitefish are the #1 commercial fish in the Great Lakes. The Service works with partners, including the tribal community, to monitor and manage lake whitefish.