

INTRODUCTIONS IN THE GREAT LAKES BASIN PROCEDURES FOR CONSULTATION

(adopted by the Council of Lake Committees in 1992)

Goal

Fishery management agencies will take all appropriate measures to prevent ill-considered or inadvertent introductions and subsequent establishment of any organism which threatens the integrity and productivity of Great Lakes fish communities as described by Lake Committees of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Fish management agencies with jurisdiction on the Great Lakes and contiguous waters will be consulted in evaluating proposed introductions. Any proposal which Great Lakes fishery management agencies believe will influence their interests may become the subject of negotiations until consensus of affected agencies is achieved. Cooperation will be sought in monitoring subsequent introductions and in developing and implementing plans for their management.

Definitions

Fish community objectives - common objectives established by Lake Committees for existing and desired fish communities. Accompanying objectives are descriptions of issues which prevent realization of objectives, and strategies for resolution of those issues. Issues include such stresses as pollution, overharvest, and introduction of non-native organisms. (Annex 1)

Area of concern - the "Convention Area" of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, i.e. the Great Lakes, their connecting waters, the St. Lawrence River to the 45th parallel of latitude, and tributaries of each of the above. Having suffered from invasions from marine creatures such as the sea lamprey, smelt, and alewife, Great Lakes fish managers recognize that introductions in their jurisdictions may be of concern not only to each other but also to managers of the lower St. Lawrence River and East Coast fisheries.

Introduction - all inadvertent or purposeful introduction or proposed movement of plant, animal, or disease organisms into the Convention area, by the private and public sector; a plant or animal moved from one place to another by man (i.e. an individual, group, or population of organisms that occur in a particular locale due to man's actions)¹.

Exotic - an organism introduced from a foreign country (i.e. one whose entire range is outside the country where found)¹.

Transplanted - an organism moved outside its native range but within a country where it occurs naturally (i.e. one whose native range includes at least a portion of the country where found)¹.

Established - an introduced organism with a permanent population(s) (i.e. one unlikely to be eliminated by man or natural causes)¹.

Possibly established - an introduced organism without the status of a permanent population but reproducing in an area where its elimination by man would be practical¹.

Localized - a confined, reproducing population of an introduced organism that can be eliminated using standard methods¹.

Reported - an introduced organism collected without evidence of reproduction¹.

Great Lakes fish management agency - Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Chippewa Ottawa Treaty Fishery Management Authority, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, New

York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Great Lakes Fishery Commission - an international body established in 1955 by Canada and the United States, which includes among its duties: the determination and recommendation of measures to make possible the maximum sustained productivity of fish stocks of common concern in the Great Lakes.

Lake Committees - committees of the GLFC established to facilitate coordinated management of each of the Great Lakes. Member are senior fishery or Great Lakes managers from Great Lakes fish management agencies.

Great Lakes Fish Disease Control Committee - a GLFC committee which has as its objective the control and management of infectious diseases in the Great Lakes basin. Agencies are represented on this committee by hatchery administrators and pathologists from fishery agencies, plus representatives of the private sector.

Consultation procedures

1. Initial notification - A fish management agency wishing to sponsor a non native introduction or needing to report an accomplished introduction (whether planned or inadvertent, by public or private sector) shall provide the GLFC Secretariat with an initial notification (Annex 2). The Secretariat will distribute the initial notification to members of the Lake Committees and the GLFDCC, for comment within six weeks.

All introductions or proposals for introduction must be reported including those not under the control of the fishery agency in whose jurisdiction they occur, and those judged to be rather innocuous. Use of procedures such as triploidy, hybridization, and sterilization do not cancel an agency's obligation to consult on a planned introduction. Comprehensive reporting will eliminate interjurisdictional misunderstanding on whether a particular introduction poses a potential threat. Reporting of non-agency plans for introduction may also provide the means by which agencies can highlight the impact of unregulated activities in their respective jurisdictions. Members of the private sector who choose to participate in the consultation procedure will find much support in the cooperative atmosphere of independent jurisdictions seeking to address a common problem.

¹ Terminology adopted by the AFS Exotic Fish Section at its annual business meeting on 18 August 1983 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

As a courtesy the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization shall be kept advised and invited to comment. However, only agencies which are signatory to the Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, or which participate as regular members of Lake Committees and the Great Lakes Fish Disease Control committee may participate in the formal consultation procedure.

2. Consensus building - If the Secretariat receives an expression of concern in response to the initial notification, the agency which issued the notification shall be asked to provide a fully documented prospectus (Annex 3) to the Secretariat for distribution and consultation at a regular meeting of the appropriate GLFC committee. This would be the GLFDCC for disease considerations plus the Council of Lake Committees if disease is not the primary concern. Special meetings may be arranged if time considerations are not compatible with regular meeting schedules, and if special arrangements are acceptable to all members of the committee in question. Concern must be transmitted in person at a formally convened meeting of the appropriate committee, in order that evidence can be evaluated and the "negotiation to consensus" of SGLFMP can be attempted. Thus it is essential that agencies appoint to these committees individuals with the necessary authority for negotiation. At least six weeks should be allowed between distribution of the fully documented proposal and its consideration at a meeting, in order that experts can be consulted, and statements prepared.

3. Arbitration - If Lake Committee members cannot reach consensus on an introduction issue, one or more parties to the dispute may request arbitration (non-binding) by the GLFC, as provided for in SGLFMP.

If the GLFDCC is unable to achieve consensus on a disease introduction issue, the Council of Lake Committees will have an opportunity to consider the question. If the disease introduction issue still cannot be resolved, arbitration (non-binding) by the GLFC may be requested by one or more parties to the dispute represented on the Council of Lake Committees.

If arbitration is requested the Commission may appoint a fact-finding group of experts, before hearing the dispute and recommending a course of action.

4. Post-introduction - If the introduction occurs, the GLFDCC, Lake Committees, and the CLC (as appropriate), will request annual reports from agencies on the status of the introduced organism, and will update fish community objectives or guidelines in the fish disease model program, for management of the introduction.

5. Information needs - Lake Committees should include in their fish community plans a description of all introductions, their status (established, possibly established, localized, reported), and a management strategy (monitor, eradicate, promote). (Annex 1) Lake Committees should also coordinate the quantity as well as the quality of introductions by establishing stocking ceilings and agreements for allocating stocking opportunities, based on the commonly perceived ability of the forage base to sustain predator populations.

As background information, the GLFDCC should document all known disease agents in Great Lakes waters, their status and management strategies, if any. (Such a comprehensive list would be useful in determining whether a particular agent is new to the Great Lakes or is thought to pose a particular threat.) (Annex 4) The GLFDCC should provide an overview of fish disease management principles (for example, definition of acceptable quarantine, a description of inspection requirements including rationale, and philosophies such as "hatcheries, not lots, are given a disease classification in the model program", etc.). This could include a review of disease characteristics (established, vertically transmitted, treatable, mortality rates) and their management implications, using case history examples such as ERM, IHNV, and whirling disease. Making this information explicit would be useful to the GLFDCC, Lake Committees, the CLC, and the GLFC when confronted with new and poorly understood diseases. (Annex 5)

Lake Committees and the GLFDCC should flag emerging areas of concern for the information and discussion of fellow members, e.g., the demand for upriver bright salmon and weed control that might allow the establishment of the disease IHNV and grass carp respectively. (Annex 6)

Other pieces of information which could be appended to assist in managing introductions include an essay on the impacts of previous introductions (Annex 7), regulatory strategies (Annex 8), guidelines for evaluating introductions (Annex 9), and a list of contacts from the jurisdictions (Annex 10).

ANNEXES

1. Fish community objectives - lake lists of all species with status and management strategy.
2. Initial notification requirement.
3. Prospectus requirements - GLFDCC will develop disease information requirements as part of quarantine protocol currently under consideration.
4. Disease agents in the Great Lakes, their status and associated management strategies - from GLFDCC model program, the "Guide to Integrated Fish Health Management in the Great Lakes", Dechtiar's parasite list, etc.
5. Principles for fish disease management.
6. Posting of emerging concerns by Lake Committees and GLFDCC.
7. Impacts of previous introductions, including characteristics of native species especially susceptible to genetic dilution, predation, competition and disease.
8. Regulatory strategies, including Daily's egg and fish importation regulation summary, policies and practices which afford a measure of protection.
9. Evaluation guidelines - adaptation of AFS protocol.
10. Agency contacts.

Annex 2

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INITIAL NOTIFICATION OF INTRODUCTION

Specific information on the following items comprises an initial notification of introduction:

- A. species
- B. strain
- C. stage of life cycle
- D. site of origin
- E. place of introduction
- F. previous importation and results.
- G. date
- H. objective
- I. disease status of source

Annex 3

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OUTLINE

FULLY DOCUMENTED PROSPECTUS ON INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive discussion (with references) of the following items comprises a fully documented prospectus on an introduction:

A. species

B. strain

C. stage of life cycle to be imported

D. site of origin

E. proposed place of introduction

F. objectives of the introduction and explanation why such an objective cannot be met through utilization of any Great Lakes Basin stocks

G. the proposed introduction's preferred habitat, potential parasites and diseases, potential for competition with species in the new environment and possible genetic impacts on local stocks

H. previous implorations of this nature and results

I. plan for follow-up assessment vis a vis introduction's success in meeting its objective, plus its impact on the existing fish community.

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