



Great Lakes Fishery Commission

For Immediate Release
October 7, 2024

Contact: Greg McClinchey
226-980-9193

Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Cheboygan Area Public Library, and Earth Week Plus to Premiere Award-Winning Documentary in Free, Exclusive Cheboygan Screening

Cheboygan, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission), Cheboygan Area Public Library, and Earth Week Plus Committee invite the community to a premiere of the award-winning documentary film, *THE FISH THIEF: A Great Lakes Mystery* at the Cheboygan Opera House on Wednesday, October 9 at 7pm in Cheboygan, Michigan. The event is free and open to the public, with a panel discussion to follow.

THE FISH THIEF, narrated by Oscar-winner J.K. Simmons, is a film that tells the remarkable true story of the fight to save the Great Lakes fishery from one of the most destructive species: the sea lamprey. The sea lamprey's incursion into the Great Lakes in the mid-1900s decimated populations of lake trout, whitefish, and other species that were integral to the region's economy and way of life. The crash destroyed jobs and businesses, devastating towns, tribal communities, and First Nations in Canada and the United States. In the face of the destruction, a tenacious group of scientists fought back and worked for years, tirelessly searching for a way to control the marine villain. What they discovered continues to influence the Great Lakes region's economic fortunes and sounds a warning about the future of natural resources and the prosperity of millions around the world today.

THE FISH THIEF is the result of nearly eight years of production. Filming took place across the entire Great Lakes region in Canada and the United States with the help and cooperation of tribal communities and First Nations, fisheries biologists, Great Lakes historians, natural resource agencies, conservation and environmental organizations, sport fishing organizations and concerned citizens. Director Lindsey Haskin also took cameras offshore in Canadian and American waters on scientific research ships, commercial fishing gill net tugs and trap net boats, and private craft helmed by passionate sport anglers.

"*THE FISH THIEF* is the remarkable story of an existential threat to our fishery—the devastation caused by invasive sea lampreys and the relentless effort of scientists, fishers, and politicians to find a solution," said Marc Gaden, the Commission's executive secretary. "Sea lamprey control was a turning point for our region." Gaden continued, "Sea lamprey control gave managers the



EST 1955 BY TREATY

Great Lakes Fishery Commission
2200 Commonwealth Blvd, Suite 100
Ann Arbor, MI, 48105

734.662.3209
glfc.org

ability to restore our fisheries and those fisheries brought people back to the Great Lakes. Without sea lamprey control, which is ongoing, we would not have the bustling \$6 billion fishery that we enjoy today. This film is an exciting, good news story of how people overcame near total loss on one of the greatest resources on the planet.”

While *THE FISH THIEF* has been selected for, and shown at, numerous festivals, the film is not yet available to the public as the Commission continues to search for an appropriate service to host the film. Exclusive public screenings like this provide the public the ability to catch a glimpse at this exciting story before it is widely released. Learn more about the film and see the trailer at <http://TheFishThief.com>.



Left: Anglers enjoy a day on the lake. Photo: Lindsey Haskin.

Right: A scientist performs a bioassay at Hammond Bay Biological Station during the search for a pesticide to selectively control sea lampreys circa 1950. Photo: GLFC.



The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The commission has the responsibility to support fisheries research, control the invasive sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, and facilitate implementation of A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, a



provincial, state, and tribal fisheries management agreement.



EST 1955 BY TREATY

Great Lakes Fishery Commission
2200 Commonwealth Blvd, Suite 100
Ann Arbor, MI, 48105

734.662.3209
glfc.org