



Lake Erie Fisheries Status and Trends

Lake Erie Research Unit

Chuck Murray

Mission: *To protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities*

Tonight's Presentation

- Yellow Perch
- Walleye
- Smallmouth Bass
- Trout

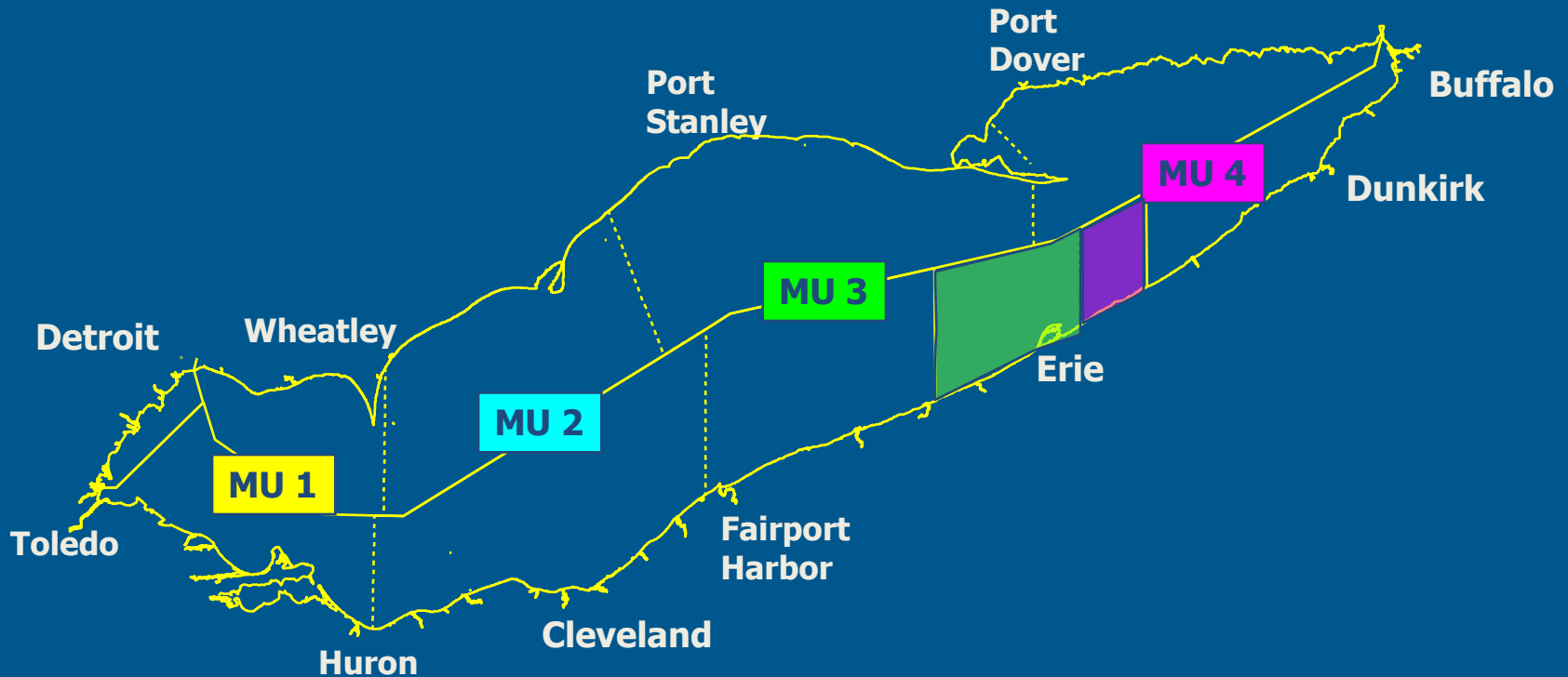


Yellow Perch

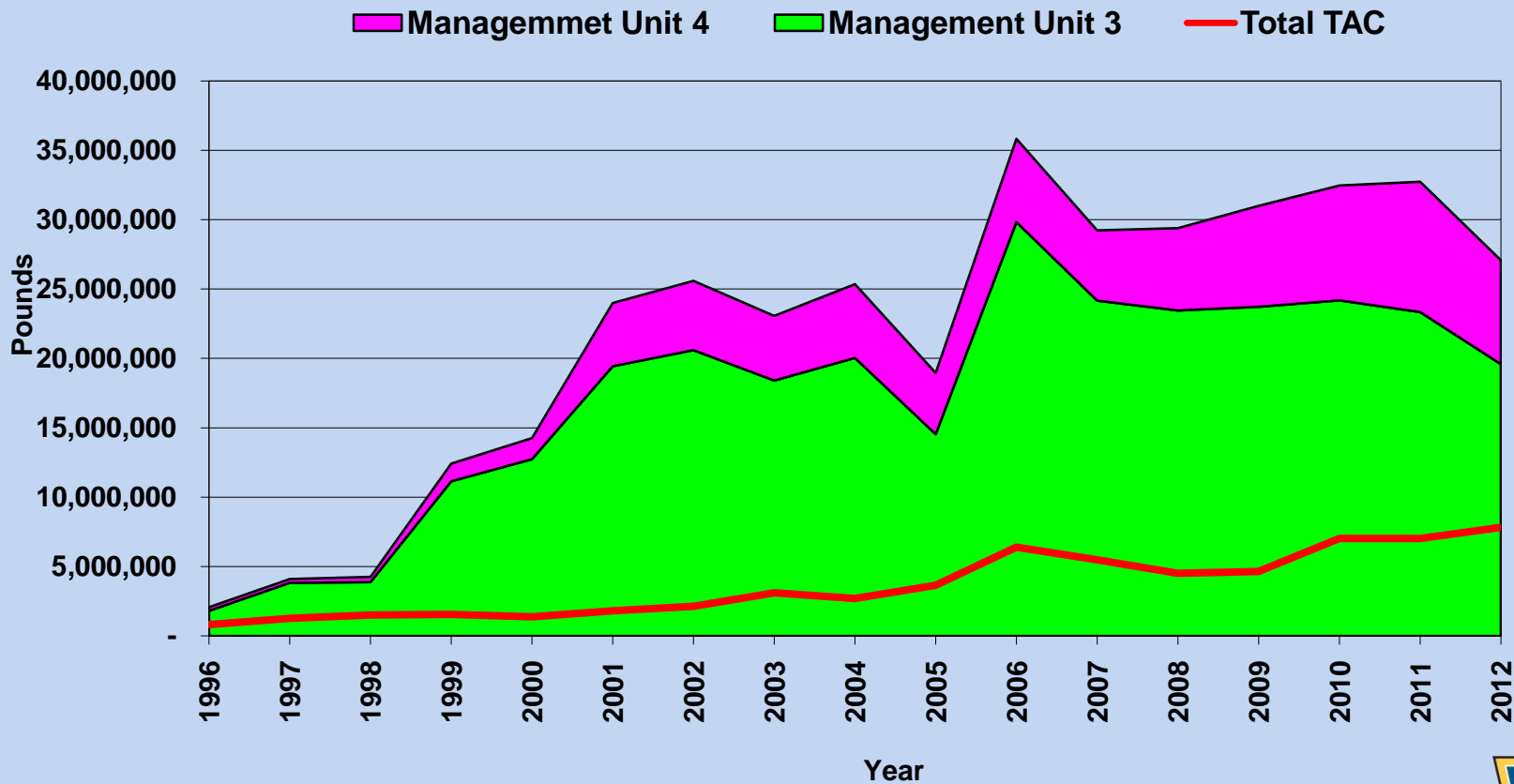
- **Viable Sport and Commercial Fishery**
- **Excellent recruitment in recent years**
- **Controlled by a Total Allowable Catch (TAC)**
 - **13.13 million lbs lake wide**
 - **1.044 lbs Pennsylvania**



Lake Erie Yellow Perch Management Units (MUs)



Yellow Perch Biomass Age 3+

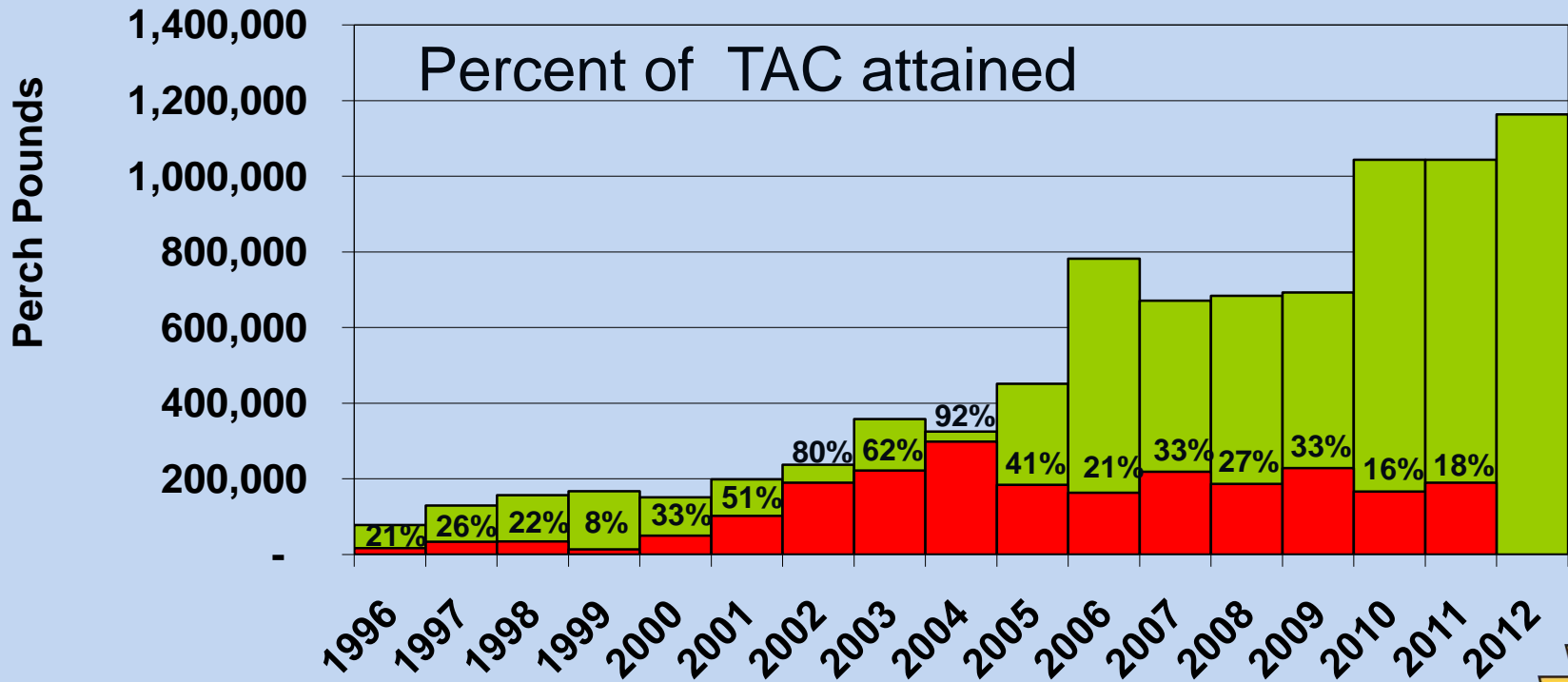


Yellow Perch Quota and Harvest

Pennsylvania only

Yellow Perch Quota and Harvest

■ Quota ■ Estimated Harvest



• Pennsylvania's Commercial Fishery

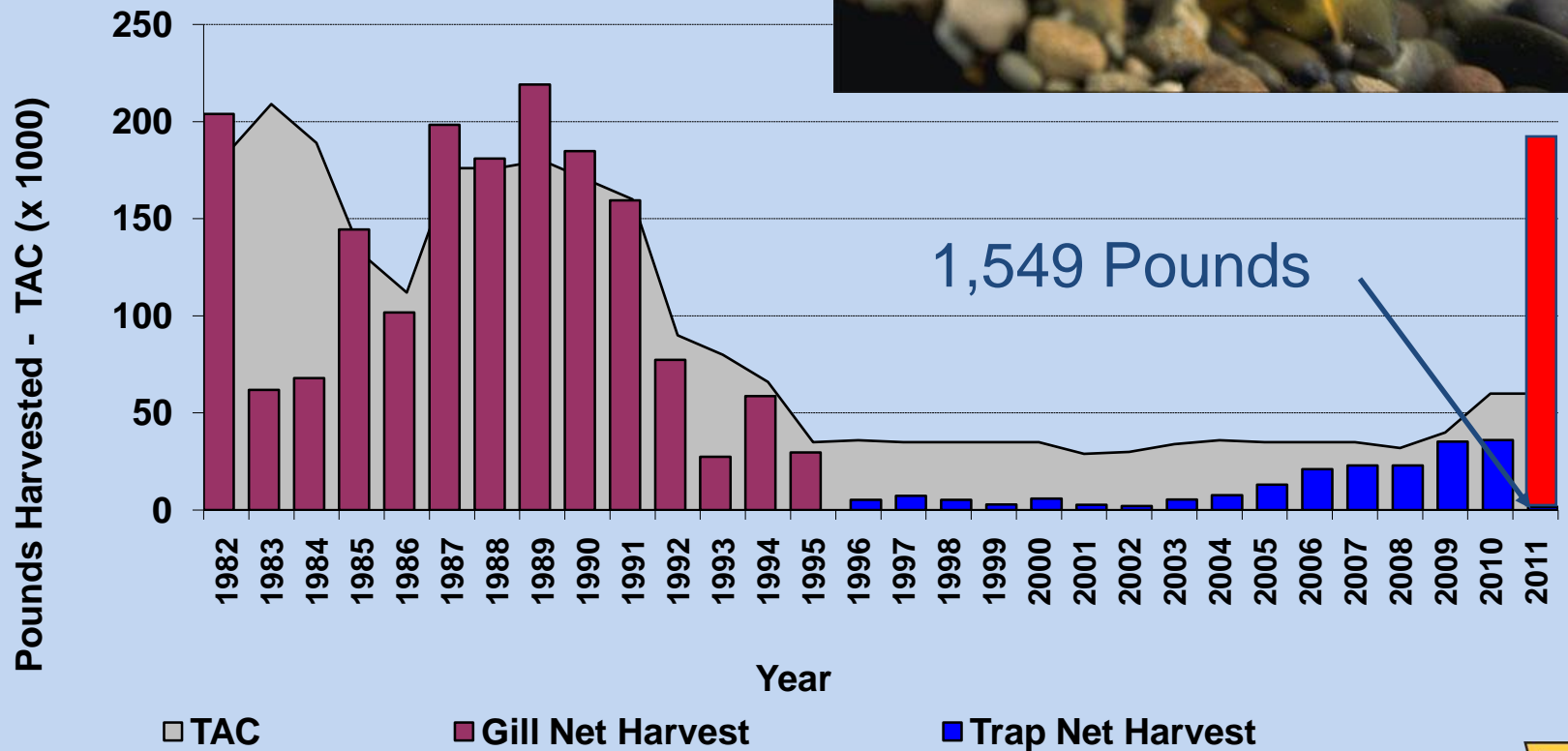


- Gill nets banned in PA waters after 1996
 - Reduced the active commercial fishers from 7 to 2
 - Additional License in 2012
- Internal TAC for Yellow Perch and Walleye
- Total catch in 2011 = 2,127 lbs
- 95% reduction in harvest
- Perch is the primary species harvested (72%)
- 8 species were harvested

Species	Pounds Harvested
Yellow Perch	1,542
White Perch	472
Drum	81
Burbot	17
Sucker	11
Rock Bass	2
Walleye	1
Catfish	1
Total Pounds	2,127

Yellow Perch

Pennsylvania Commercial Harvest

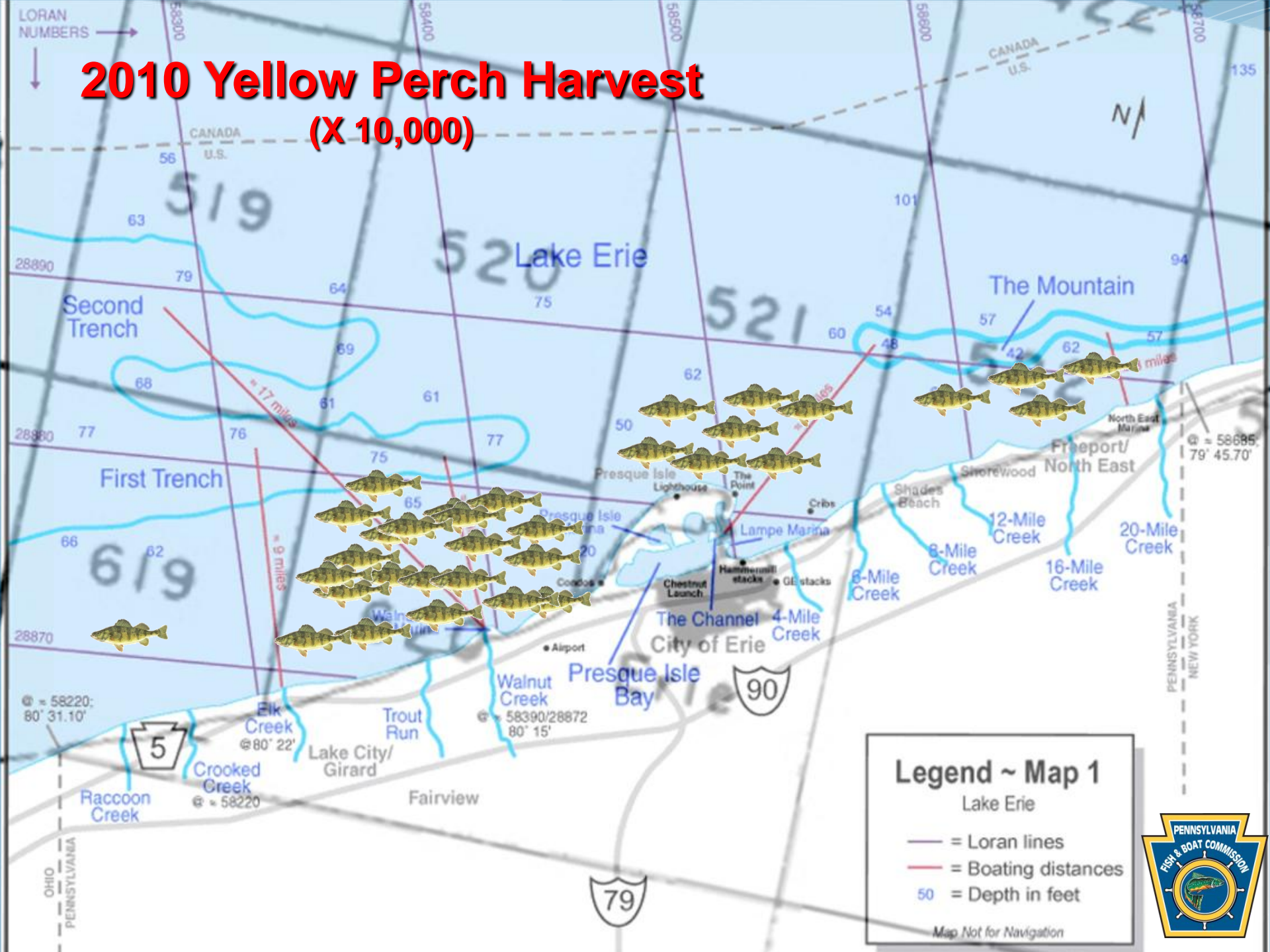


Yellow Perch

Sport Fishery



2010 Yellow Perch Harvest (X 10,000)



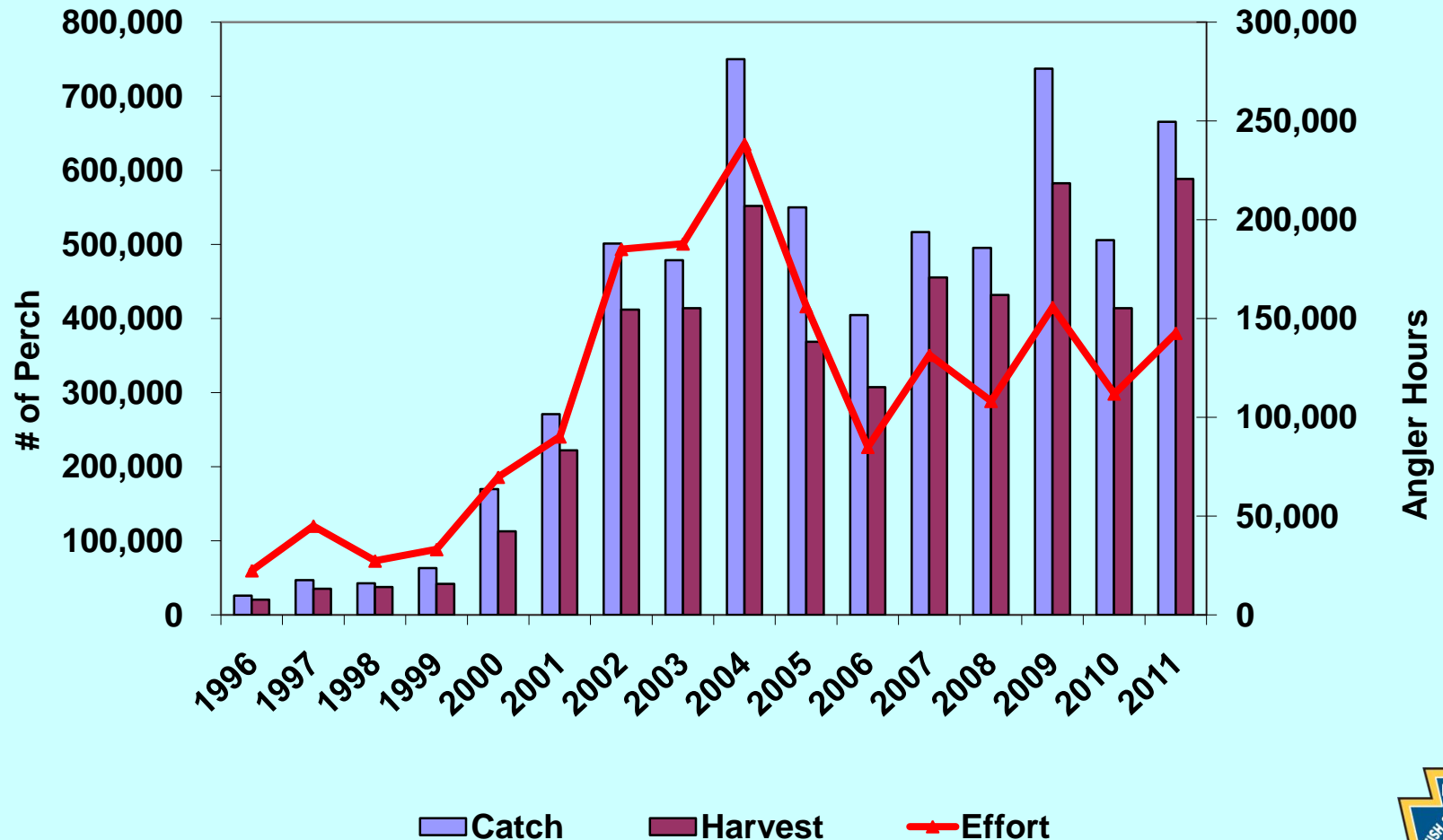
LOTRAN NUMBERS →
 ↓

CANADA
 U.S.



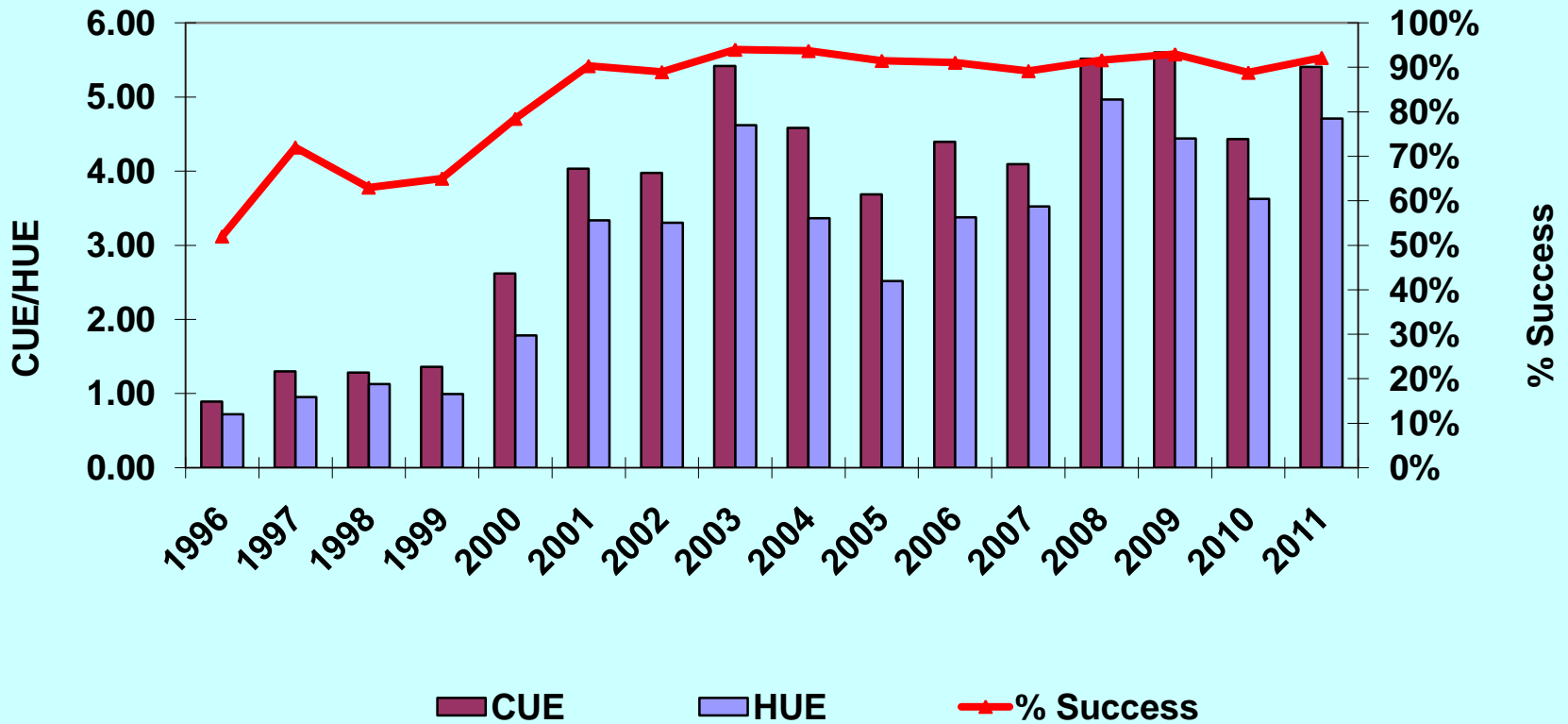
Yellow Perch Effort, Catch and Harvest

Lake Erie Boat Angler Survey



Yellow Perch Angler Catch and Success Rates

Lake Erie Boat Angler Survey

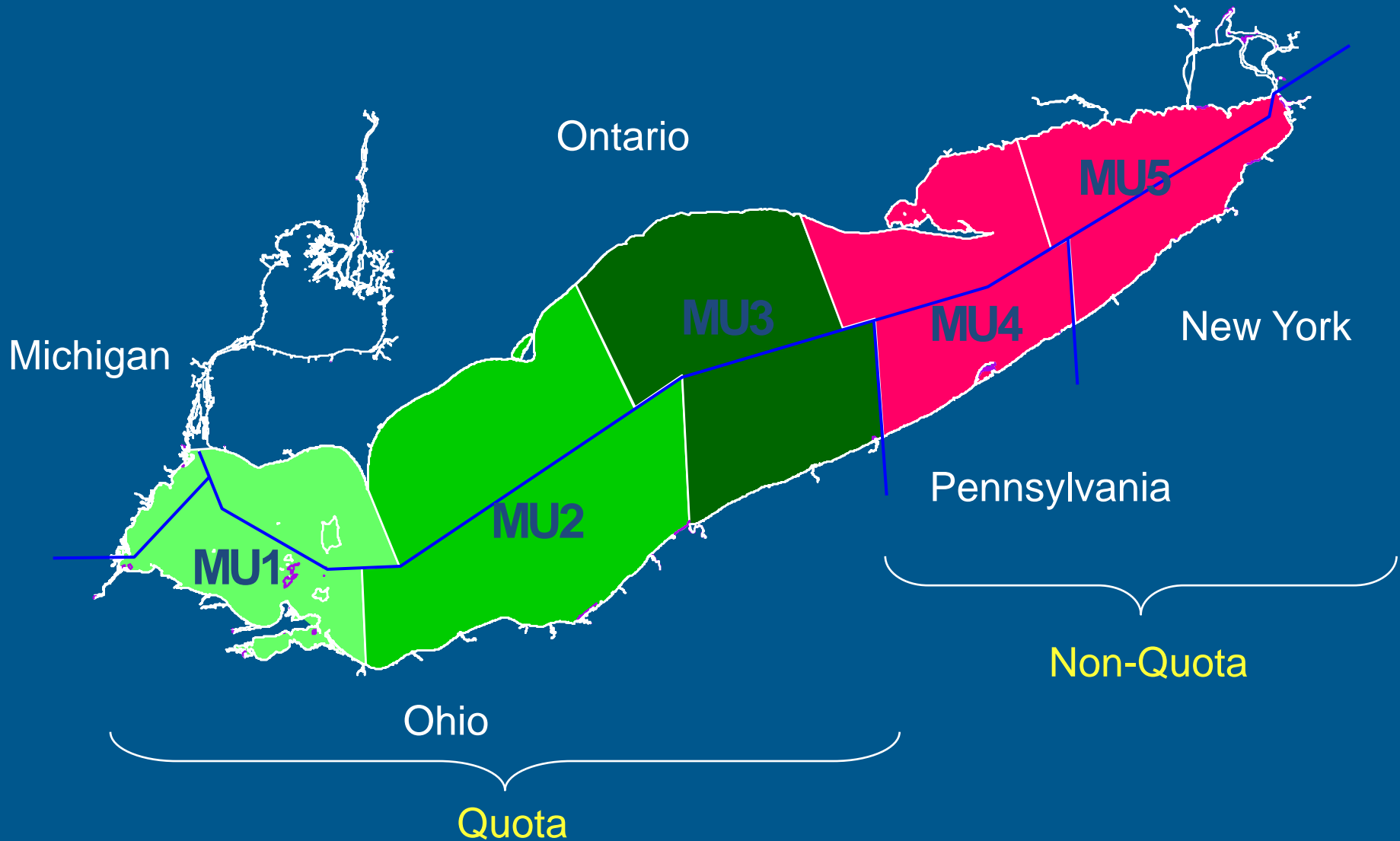


Walleye Fishery

- **Sport and Commercial Fishery**
- **Fishery is Controlled by a TAC**
 - **OH, Ontario and MI : 3.49 million fish in 2011 Lake Wide**
- **Recent trends**
 - **Poor Walleye fishing 2002**
 - **Phenomenal fishing in 2006**
 - **Excellent 2003 year class**
 - **Very low recruitment in 2006**
 - **2007 hatch best since 2003**
 - **2008, 2009 and 2011 poor hatches**
 - **Good hatch in 2010**



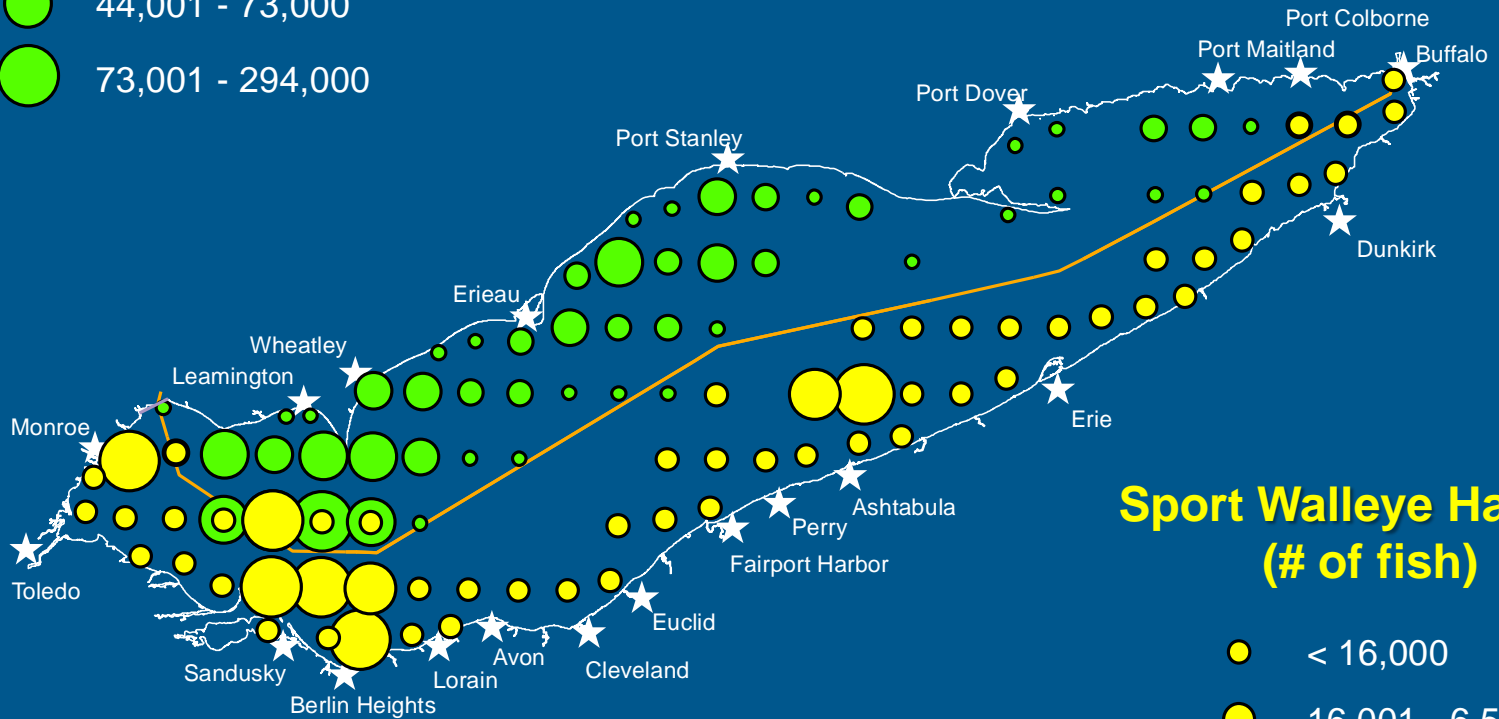
Lake Erie Walleye Management Units



Commercial Walleye Harvest (# of fish)

- < 4,000
- 4,001 - 15,000
- 15,001 - 44,000
- 44,001 - 73,000
- 73,001 - 294,000

Lake Erie Walleye Harvest 2011

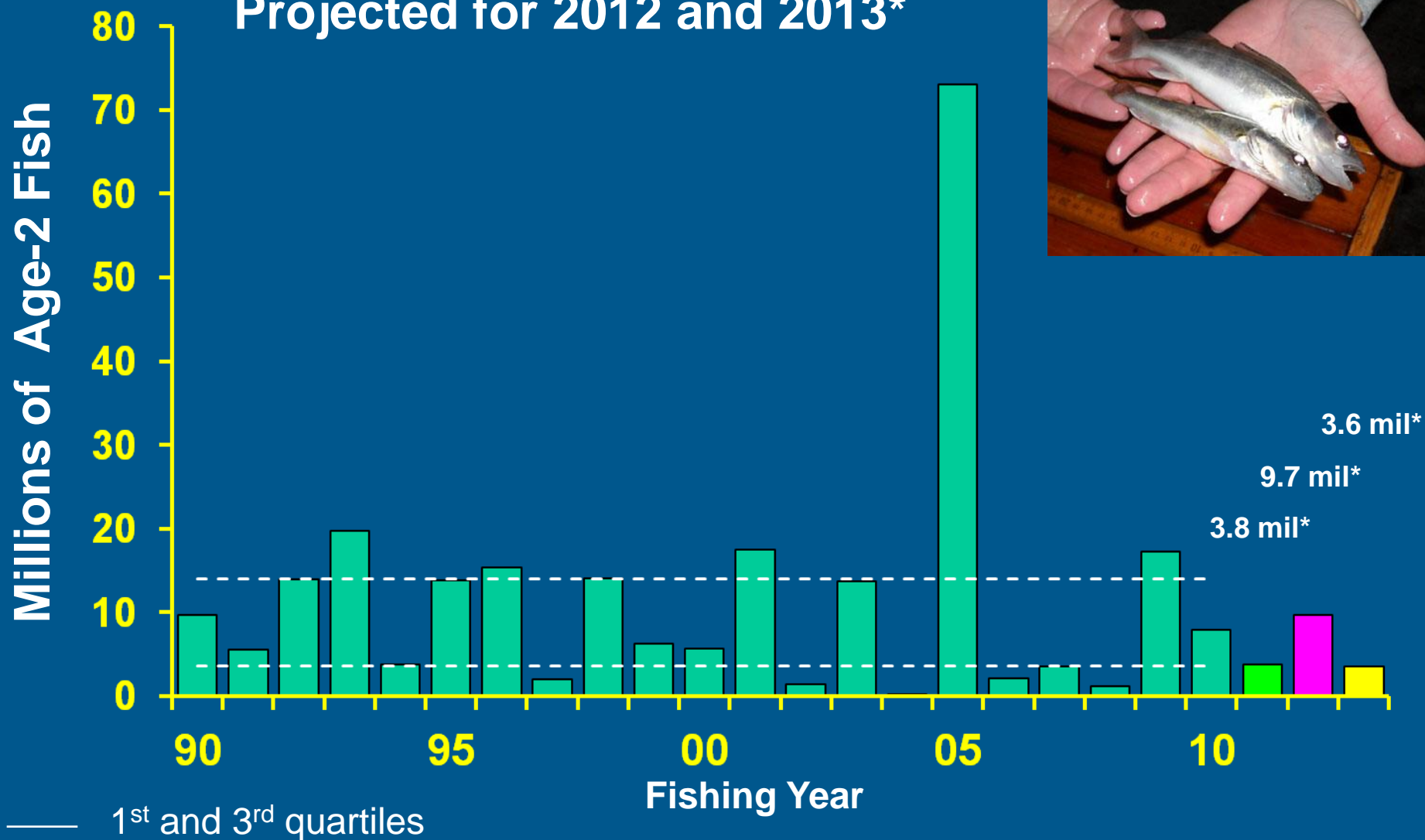


Sport Walleye Harvest (# of fish)

- < 16,000
- 16,001 - 6,500
- 6,501 - 16,000
- 16,001 - 29,000
- 29,001 - 59,000

Age-2 Walleye Recruits

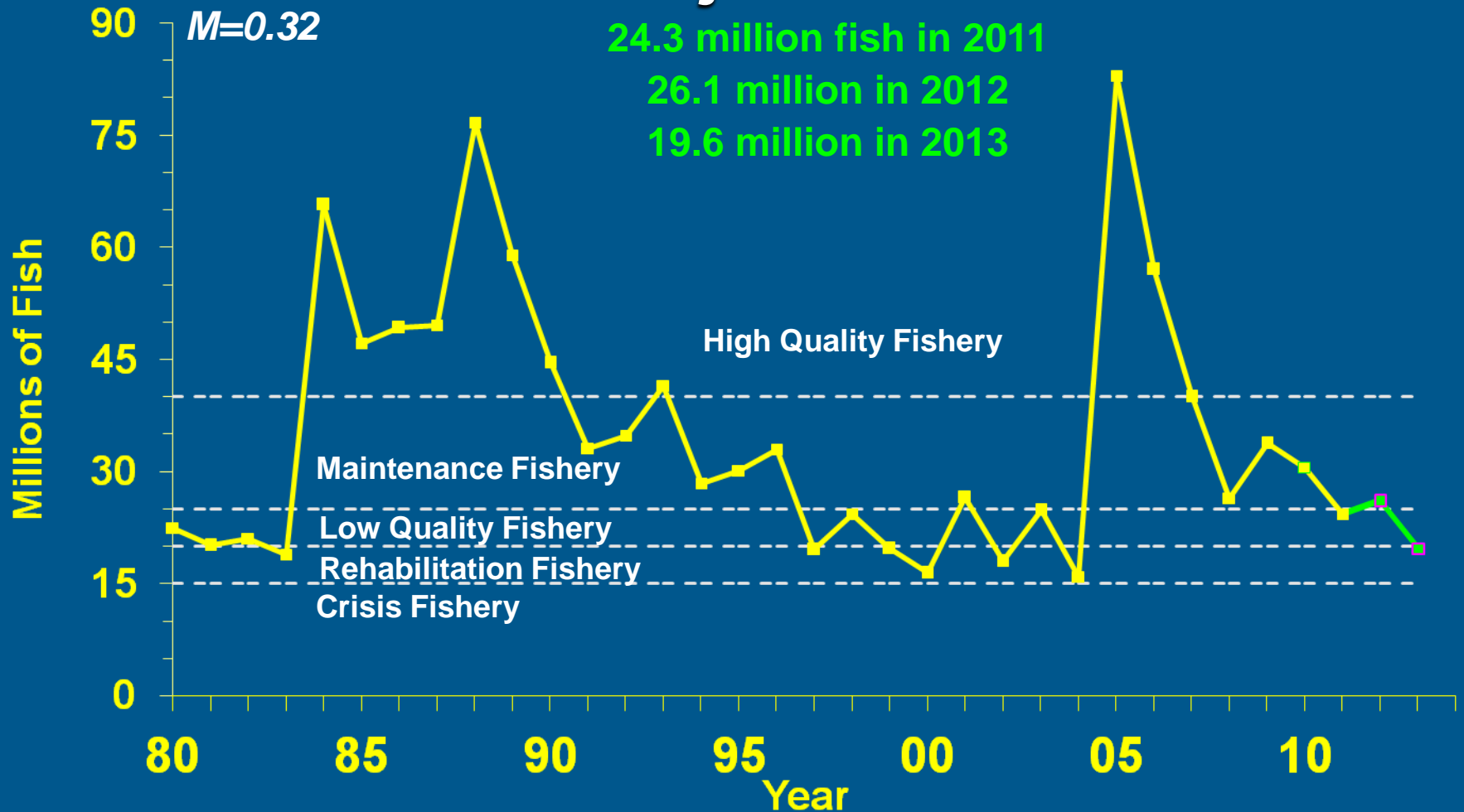
Projected for 2012 and 2013*



2012 model; M=0.32

*calculated using interagency age-0 trawl index

Age 2+ WB Walleye Abundance Projected



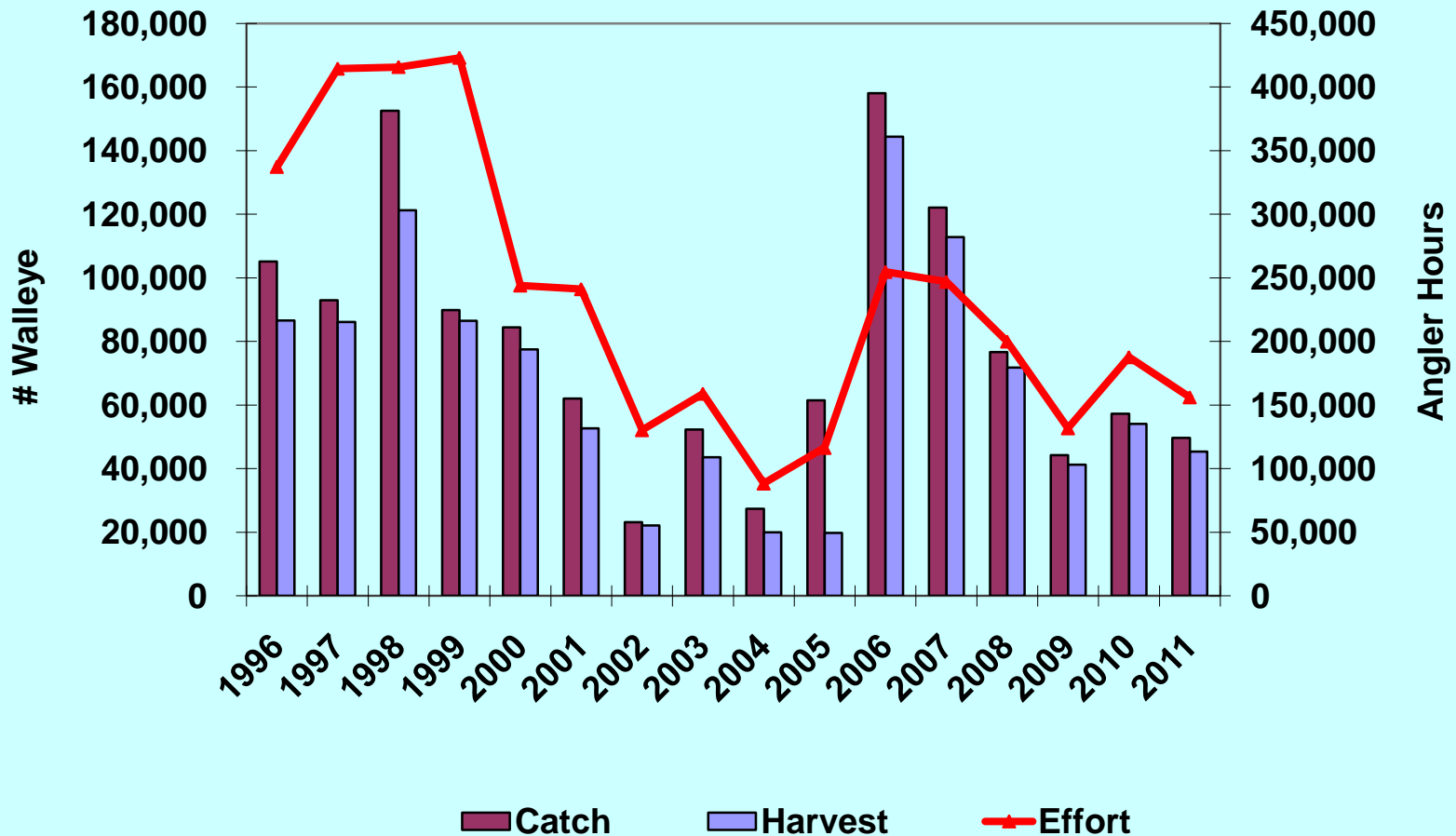
Walleye

Sport Fishery



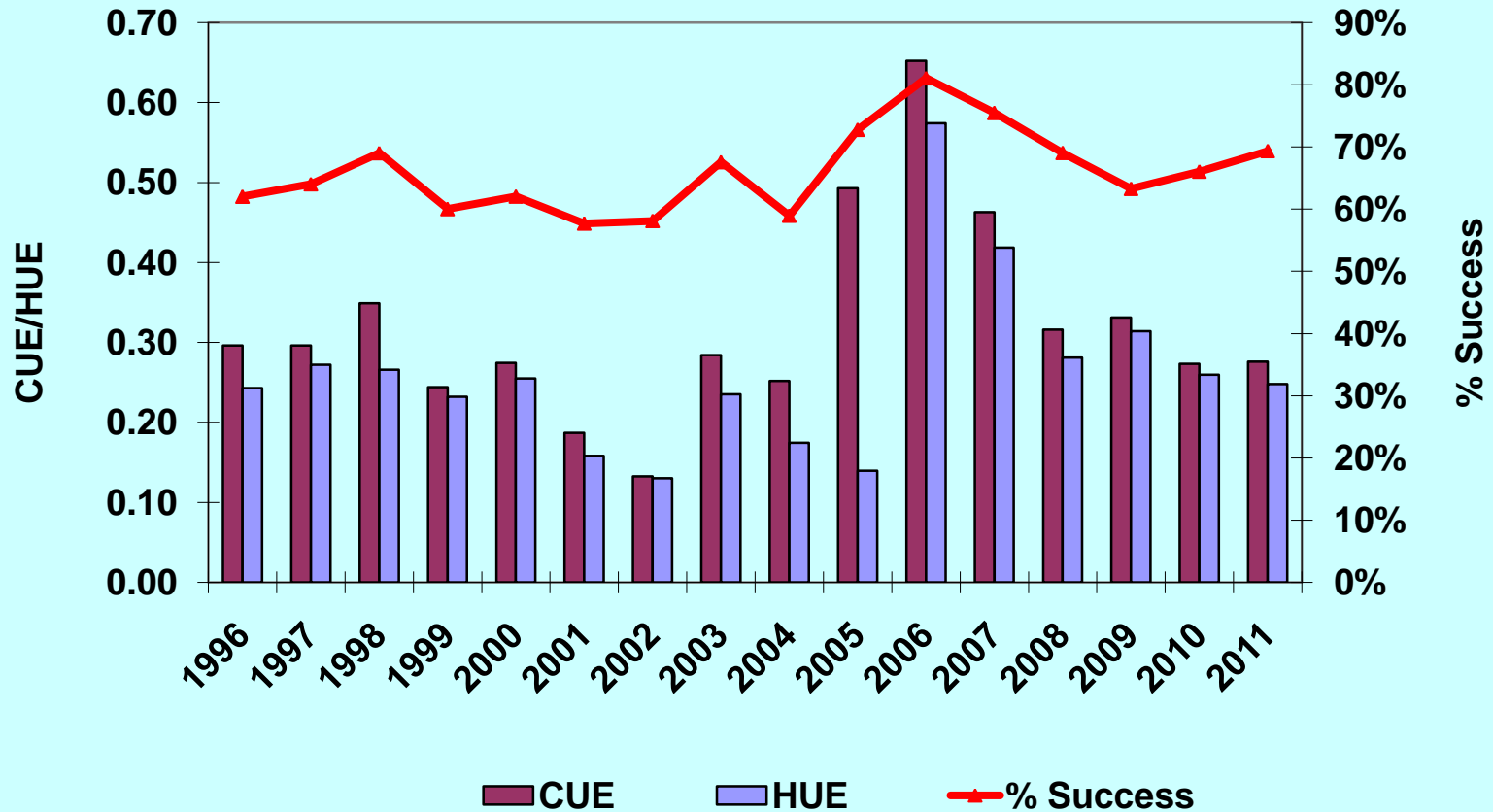
Walleye Effort, Catch and Harvest

Lake Erie Boat Angler Survey



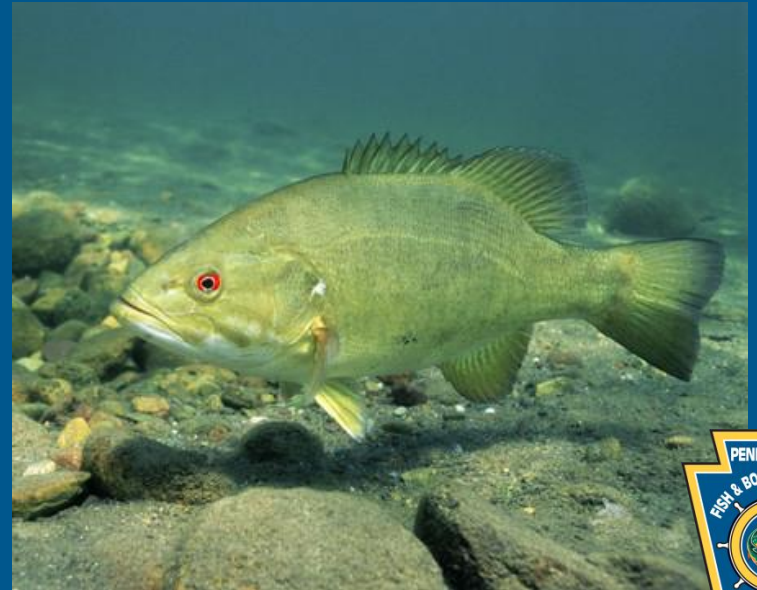
Walleye Angler Catch and Success Rates

Lake Erie Boat Angler Survey



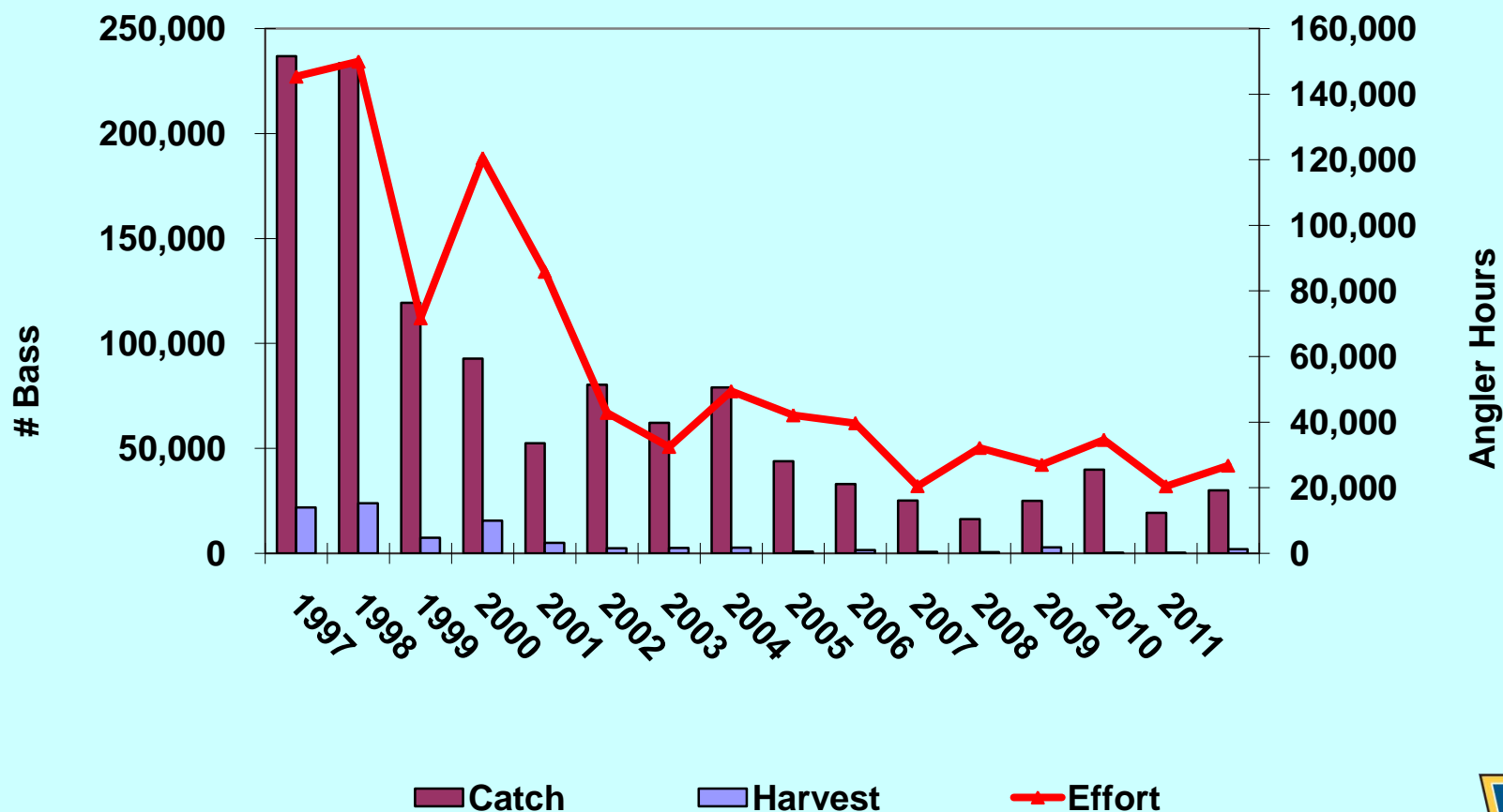
Smallmouth Bass

- Sport Fishery ONLY
- Represents <10% of the total sport fishing effort
- Over 90% of the bass that are caught are released
- Angler catch rates are erratic
- Growth is increasing
- Trophy fish are abundant



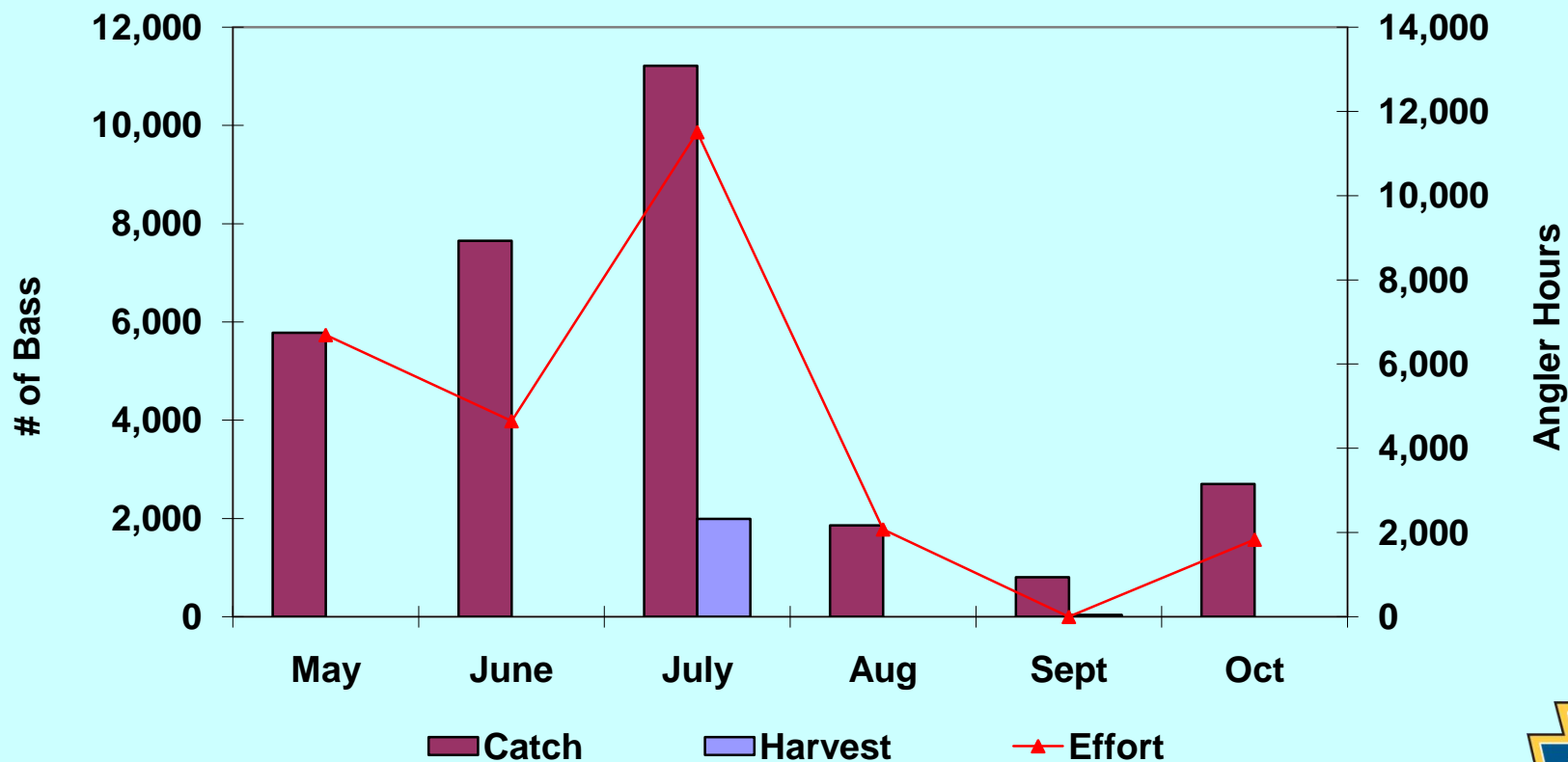
Smallmouth Bass Effort, Catch and Harvest

Lake Erie Boat Angler Survey



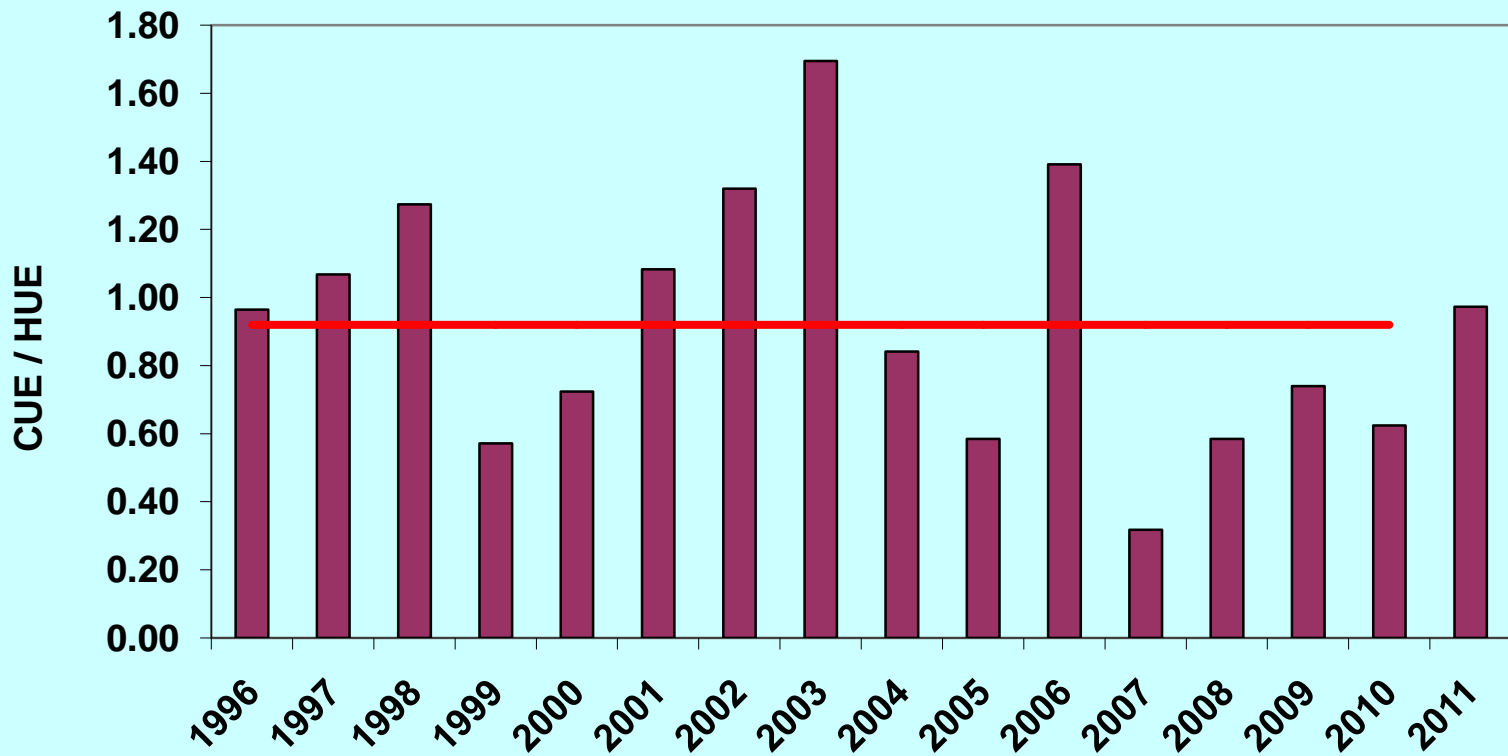
Smallmouth Bass Effort, Catch and Harvest by Month

2011 Lake Erie Boat Angler Survey



Smallmouth Bass Angler Catch Rates

Lake Erie Boat Angler Survey



Biggest Smallmouth Bass 2011

BASS, SMALLMOUTH

<i>Angler</i>	<i>Hometown</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Bait</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Length (inches)</i>	<i>Girth (inches)</i>
Andrew Schell	Halifax	Lake Erie	5/6	Tube Jig	8 lb.	21.5	17.90
Rodney Derricot	Johnstown	Lake Erie	5/6	Snyees	7 lb.	20	17
Jason Verdier	East Berlin	Susquehanna River	12/3	Yum Dinger	5 lb. 12 oz.	21	-
Charles Anderson	Duncannon	Lake Erie	5/20	Silver Buddy	5 lb. 10 oz.	20	15.5
Jeffrey Long	Pittsburgh	Lake Erie	8/31	Golden Shiner	5 lb. 8 oz.	21.5	15.75



Biggest Smallmouth Bass 2011

BASS, SMALLMOUTH

<i>Angler</i>	<i>Hometown</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Bait</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Length (inches)</i>	<i>Girth (inches)</i>
Andrew Schell	Halifax	Lake Erie	5/6	Tube Jig	8 lb.	21.5	17.90
Rodney Derricot	Johnstown	Lake Erie	5/6	Snyees	7 lb.	20	17
Jason Verdier	East Berlin	Susquehanna River	12/3	Yum Dinger	5 lb. 12 oz.	21	-
Charles Anderson	Duncannon	Lake Erie	5/20	Silver Buddy	5 lb. 10 oz.	20	15.5
Jeffrey Long	Pittsburgh	Lake Erie	8/31	Golden Shiner	5 lb. 8 oz.	21.5	15.75



Lake Erie

Trout and Salmon Program

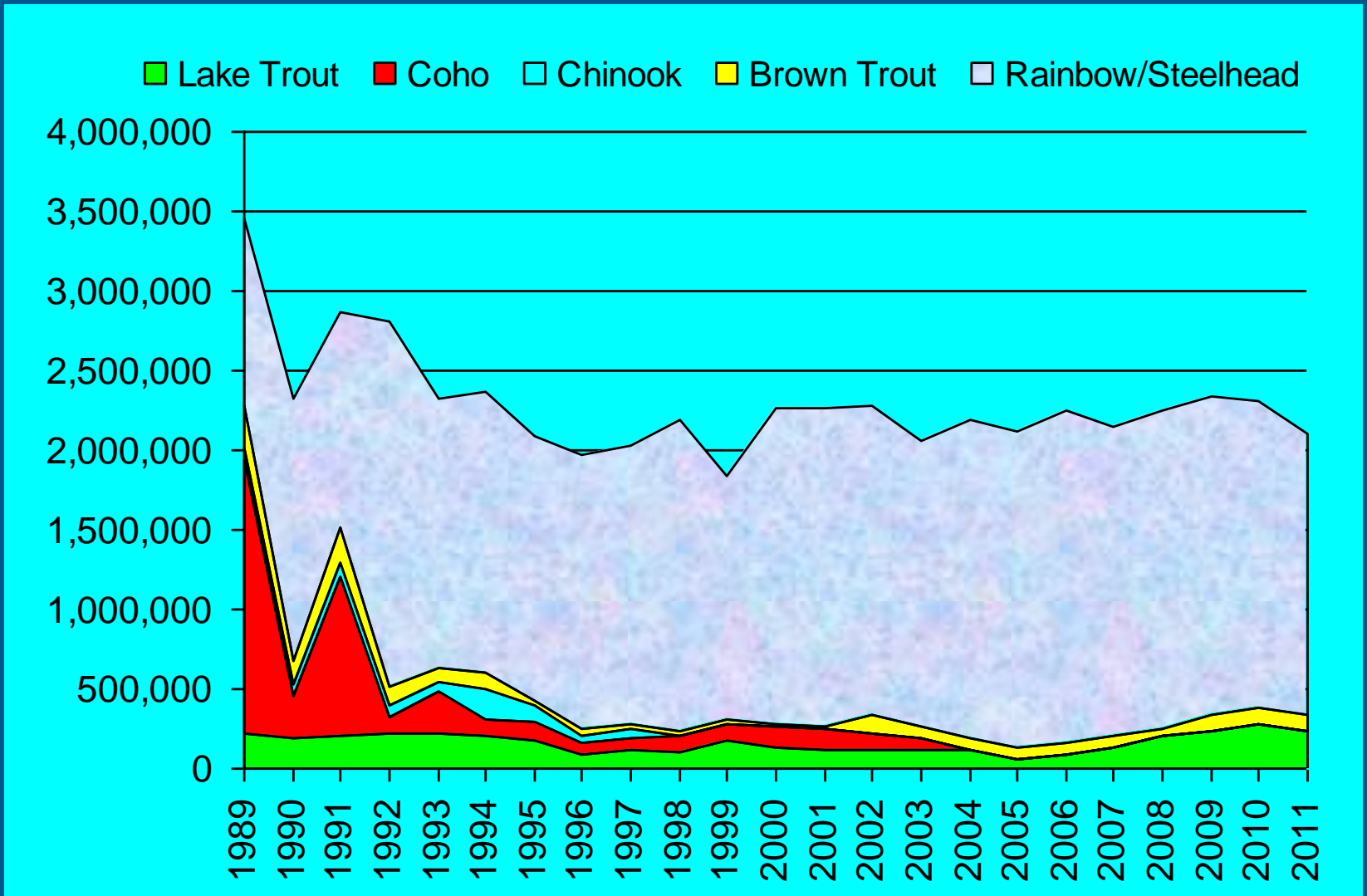
- Maintained through stocking
- Steelhead (rainbow) trout are the primary focus
- Historically – other Pacific Salmon
- Lake Trout – PA's other native “trout”
- Brown trout



Hatchery Production

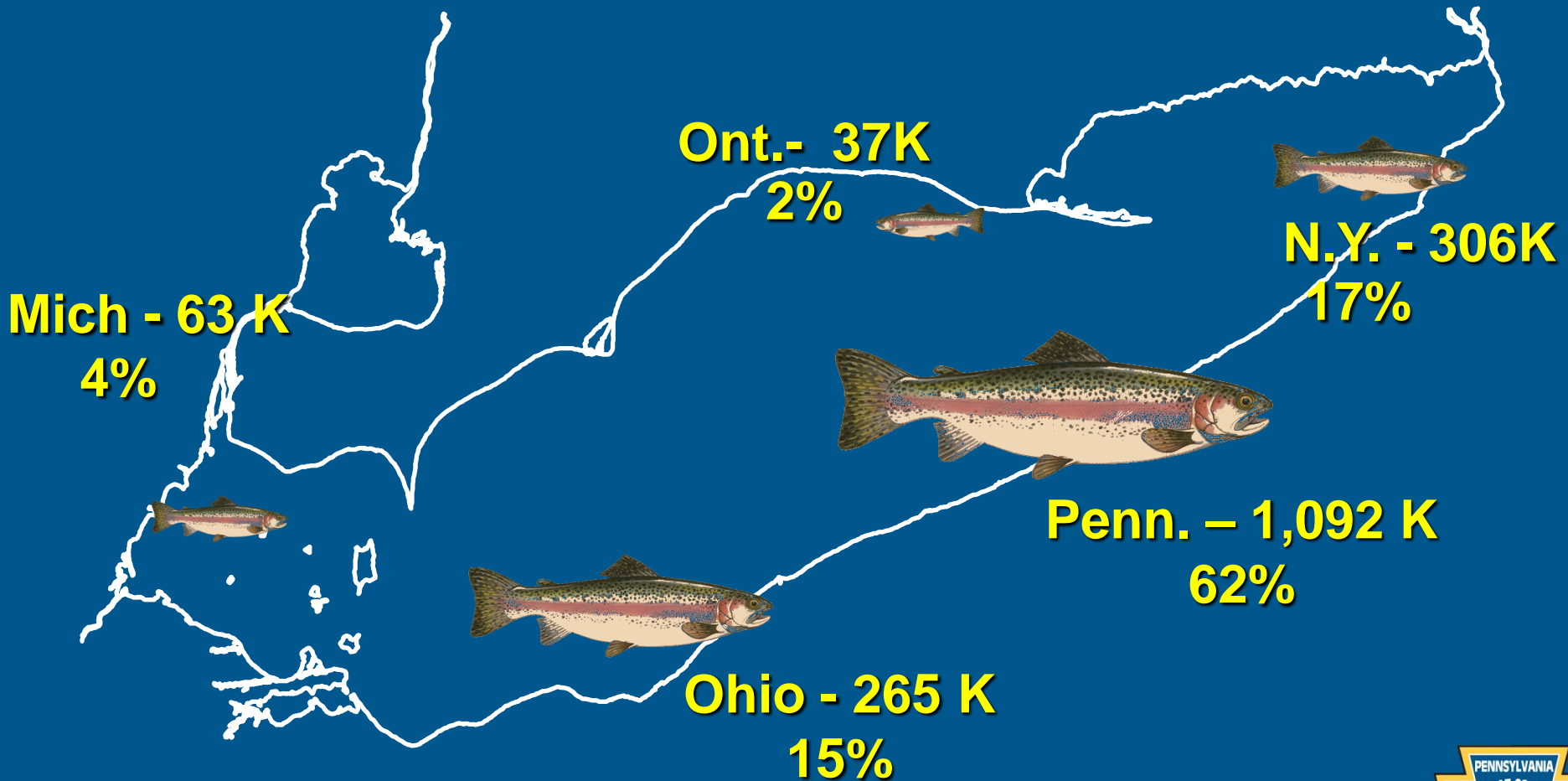


Lake Erie Salmonine Stocking



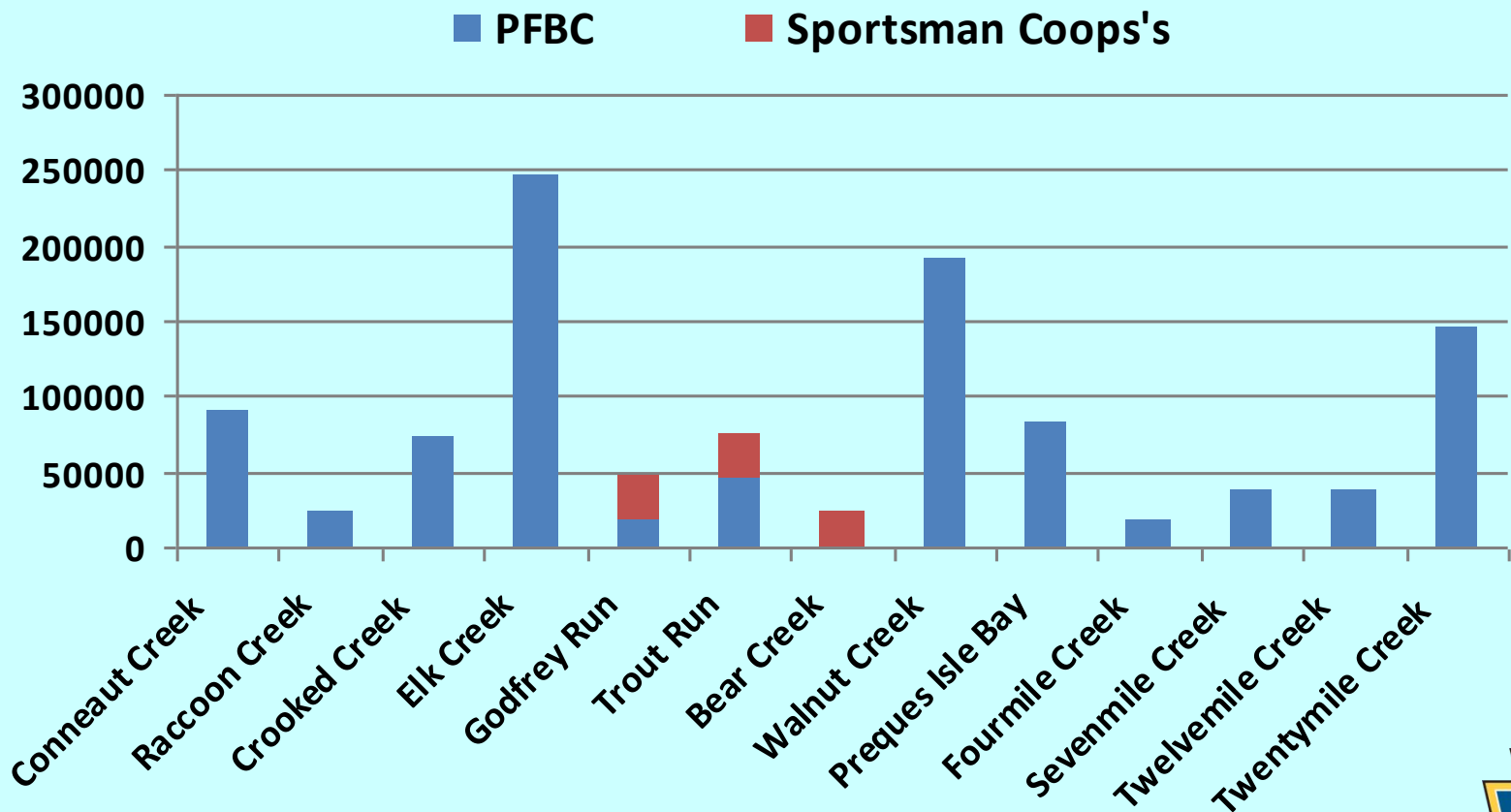
2011 Rainbow Trout Stocking Summary

Stocking by Jurisdiction



2011 Steelhead Stocking by Tributary / Area

Pennsylvania Waters

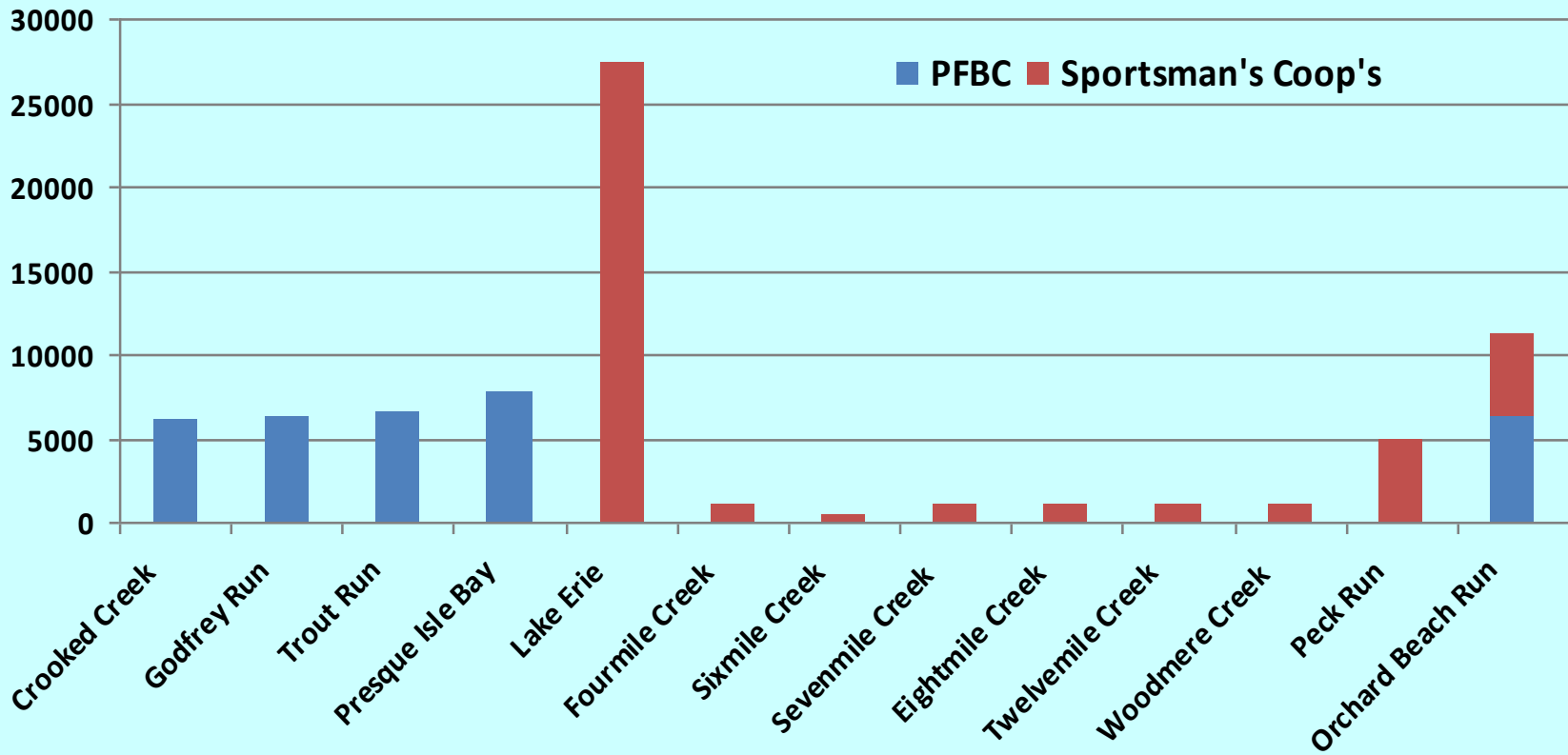


Brown Trout in Lake Erie

- **NYDEC will continue to provide eggs**
- **3rd year of the program**
 - **87,000 stocked in 2009**
 - **81,000 stocked in 2010**
 - **76,000 stocked for 2011**
 - **43,000 coops and 33,000 PFBC**
- **2011 Stocking Efforts:**
 - Linesville ~33,000 – stocked as fall yearlings**
 - 3CU ~27,500 - stocked as spring yearlings**
 - WCC ~ 15,500 – stocked as spring yearlings**
- **Fin clipping will continue for evaluation**



2011 Brown Trout Stocking by Tributary / Area Pennsylvania Waters

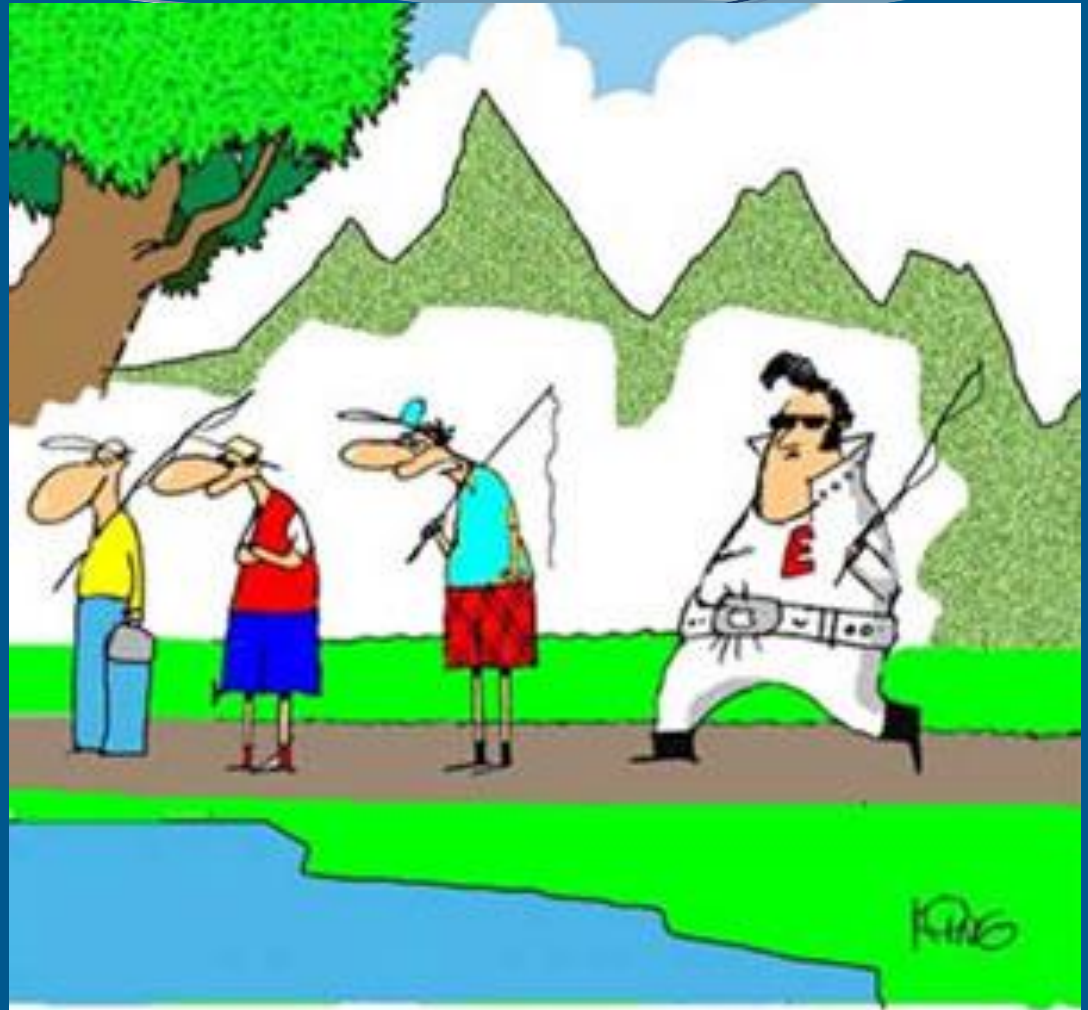


Lake Erie

Fishing Forecast 2012

- **Perch should provide excellent fishing in 2012 and beyond**
- **Walleye abundance is declining, but there should be good fishing in 2012, with nice size fish available**
- **Smallmouth Bass fishing is good and improving**
- **Brown trout numbers should continue to increase**

Questions?



"Look at this place! I bet the only person who isn't fishing today is Elvis."