



Great Lakes Fishery Commission

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Great Lakes Fishery Commission and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to Premiere Award-Winning Documentary in Free, Exclusive Harbor Springs Screening

Harbor Springs, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) and the [Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council](#) will be hosting a premiere and Q&A of the award-winning documentary film, *THE FISH THIEF: A Great Lakes Mystery* at 7pm on Wednesday, October 2nd. The screening will take place at the Lyric Theater in Harbor Springs, Michigan and be followed by a Q&A with the filmmaker and a small panel. The event is free and open to the public, though registration is required. To register, please fill out [this form](#).

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 an incredible, historical story of the near-total loss, and the recovery, of the Great Lakes fishery, today valued at more than \$6 billion annually," said Marc Gaden, the Commission's executive secretary. "By the 1940s, overfishing and habitat destruction had driven



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the resource to collapse, with the final blow coming from the invasive sea lamprey, which swam its way into the Great Lakes accidentally. The relentless pursuit of scientists, fishers, and politicians to find the solution to counter this species was nothing short of miraculous. The Great Lakes fishery was only able to survive and recuperate through the development of sea lamprey control. Without control, we would not have the booming \$6 billion fishery that local communities enjoy today. This film is an ode to those who made it possible for us to experience the Great Lakes today, and a solemn reminder that we must remain vigilant in protecting our treasured lakes,” Gaden concluded.

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 with 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.

