



Great Lakes Fishery Commission

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Great Lakes Fishery Commission to Premiere Award-Winning Documentary in Free, Exclusive Livonia Screening

Livonia, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) will be hosting a premiere of the award-winning documentary film, *THE FISH THIEF: A Great Lakes Mystery* on Thursday, September 26th at 7pm at the Livonia Civic Center Library Auditorium in Livonia, Michigan. The event is free and open to the public, with a Q&A after the show.

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 extraordinary story of devastation, discovery, and perseverance. Once a robust resource, the Great Lakes fishery, by the 1940s, fell into ruin caused by overfishing and the invasive sea lamprey," said Marc Gaden, the Commission's executive secretary. "Without the tenacious determination of scientists, fishers, and politicians to stop the sea lamprey, the Great Lakes fishery would be nonexistent today." Gaden continued, " This film is the compelling and inspiring story of how both our community and our treasured resource bounced back from near



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total loss. The Great Lakes community—whether in urban or rural areas—would suffer if not for the successful sea lamprey control measures protecting the \$6 billion Great Lakes fishery.”

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 <https://skyhoundmedia.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.



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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.



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