

# Fish Species Observed on the *Regina* and *Sport* Shipwrecks in Lake Huron

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Although occurrences of fish species are regularly reported for shallow water habitats, compositions of North American freshwater fish communities are less frequently reported from deep waters.

The purpose of the current communication is to report the species observed on two shipwrecks in Lake Huron.

On 25 September 2005, I set out from Port Sanilac, Michigan, aboard the *Sylvia Anne*, operated by Rec & Tec Dive Charters and chartered by Divers Inc. dive shop, for a morning of diving on the shipwrecks *Regina* and *Sport*. We reached *Regina* first and performed one dive between 9:25 and 9:50 A.M. The *Regina* is a 76 m (250') long steel freighter that sunk in the storm of 1913. It now sits upside down in 24 m (78') of water. The thermocline was at about 18 m (60'), about at the level of the keel of the overturned ship. Above the thermocline the temperature was 26°C (78°F), and below it was 13°C (55°F).

The hull was encrusted by algae and millions of zebra mussels, *Dreissena polymorpha*. Thousands of round gobies, *Neogobius melanostomus*, laid over this surface. One school containing approximately 200 yellow perch, *Perca flavescens*, was hanging near the keel, right around the thermocline. The school contained fish between 10 cm (4") and 18 cm (7") TL (total length). One 10 cm (4") smallmouth bass, *Micropterus dolomieu*, was defending a small (76cm/30") hole in the bottom of the hull near the keel.

The next dive took place on the *Sport*, a 17 m (56') long tugboat wrecked in 15 m (49') of water. She lays upright tilted towards her starboard side. The dive occurred between 10:50 and 11:30 A.M. I descended the line from the surface and as soon as I got to the bottom I saw a large fish speed away. I thought it was a sucker, and later concluded that it was most

likely a northern shorthead redhorse, *Moxostoma macrolepidotum macrolepidotum* (Hubbs and Lagler, 2004). As I approached *Sport* I noticed a large smallmouth bass (36 cm/14" TL) hanging about a foot above the substrate. My dive buddy and I circled around the outside of the boat. Again, there were countless zebra mussels and round gobies. However, scattered small smallmouth bass (10-15 cm/4-6"), and largemouth bass, *Micropterus salmoides* (8-13 cm/3-5"), hovered near the surface of the boat at various places, for a total of about six and three individuals, respectively. (I also saw a largemouth of similar size in the water near the dock after we returned to shore.) A 15 cm (6") rock bass, *Ambloplites rupestris*, was hanging close to the side of the boat, about four feet up from the lake bottom. Just before the dive was over I saw the largest fish of the day. It was a 46 cm (18") smallmouth bass, hanging in the water near the top of the boat.

## Literature Cited

Hubbs, C. L., and K. F. Lagler. 2004. *Fishes of the Great Lakes region*. Rev. ed. Smith, G. R. (Ed.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 