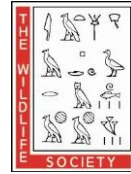




The Wildlife Society  
Manitoba Chapter



Box 20, 200 Saulteaux Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB  
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April 10, 2019

**Re: Comments on Proposed Lake Winnipeg Measures to Enhance Sustainability**

The Wildlife Society, Manitoba Chapter (TWSMB), is the oldest science-based wildlife management organization in the province and part of a large network of professional biologists, ecologists and natural resource professionals across Canada and beyond. On behalf of our membership I would like to thank you for your continued commitment to maintaining sustainable fisheries.

We appreciate seeing changes that were discussed at our organization's most recent meeting with the Honourable Rochelle Squires, including the establishment of minimum gillnet mesh sizes in the south basin. Rather than provide detailed comments on any of the other changes that have been proposed, we would like to reiterate our support of using science to support sustainable fisheries management decisions. The Lake Winnipeg Task Force document produced in 2011 provided a strong starting point for identifying data gaps in the understanding that managers and scientists have of fish stocks in Lake Winnipeg. The move to open source marketing risked reducing the amount of catch and effort data collected.

Your letter to our organization, dated March 5<sup>th</sup> 2018, mentioned the development of a functional and effective standardized database with which to better manage data on commercial production and stock monitoring. We would appreciate an update on how the department is progressing in making this database a reality and feel strongly that increasing data collection and creating and maintaining an effective database is critical to science based decision making.

The stakes are very high for all players involved - commercial fisherman in remote communities who rely on fishing and their quotas to provide for themselves and their families; for Indigenous people, to whom the use of Lake Winnipeg and the fish within are critical to maintaining their culture; to recreational fishers and their long history of communing with nature and their communities through the outdoors; and to all Manitobans, who deserve to experience this valuable resource. Therefore, we ask the government increase the resources for their own department and prioritize the collection and maintenance of data on Lake Winnipeg fish populations and the fishing effort on these stocks, and use this data to guide government to make effective fisheries management decisions.

Thank you again for your commitment to the sustainability of Manitoba's fisheries.

Sincerely

*Michel Leclaire*

Michel Leclaire  
President, The Wildlife Society, Manitoba Chapter, Inc.