



For Immediate Release
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International Charr Symposium Lures Scientists to Lake Superior

Duluth, Minnesota—Lake Superior and its cold-water fishes will be prominent in the first-ever Charr Symposium held in the United States. Charr are a cold-water group of fishes that includes lake trout, brook trout, bull trout, dolly varden and arctic charr. The charrs are the northernmost freshwater fishes on Earth.

The symposium will be June 18-21, 2018, at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center on the shore of Lake Superior. [Registration](#) is required and the deadline is May 31.

The symposium brings together experts in fisheries science from Canada, Finland, Iceland, Japan, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Sweden and other countries to discuss charr biology, management and the various fisheries charr support. The symposia are held once every three years at various locations in the Northern Hemisphere.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a major symposium sponsor, is an international organization charged with facilitating sea lamprey control and coordinating fisheries research and management in the Great Lakes of North America.

“North America is home to more charr species than any other continent on Earth,” said Don Pereira, commissioner with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and recently retired fisheries chief with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. “Duluth is the perfect location for the symposium because Lake Superior lake charr represent one of the greatest success stories in fish restoration. Lake charr were once decimated and through proper management and sea lamprey control, are now self-sustaining and near historical levels of abundance.”

Symposium sessions address management, ecology, taxonomy, genetics and evolution of charr among other topics. Keynote speaker Ian Winfield, a freshwater ecologist specializing in lake ecosystems, will highlight the cultural importance of arctic charr by showing the short film “Brass, Three Down” and discussing the arctic charr fishery of Windermere, the largest lake in the United Kingdom. Paul Vecsei, a fishery biologist and artist, will present a collection of underwater images and color illustrations of charr. Other presentations will highlight and celebrate the incredible diversity of charr across their distribution.

North America’s Great Lakes were the largest lake trout fisheries in the world until sea lamprey invaded through the Welland Canal. Sea lamprey are a parasite that attaches to fish, creates a hole and extracts blood and fluids. The parasite decimated lake trout populations in the lower Great Lakes leaving only Lake Superior with remnant stocks. After sea lamprey control efforts were implemented, lake trout fully recovered in Lake Superior. Recovery is now occurring in lakes Huron and Michigan.

“With Lake Superior as a backdrop it is exciting to see so many fisheries experts gathered in Duluth to exchange information on the advances in charr biology,” said Don Schreiner, fisheries specialist with Minnesota Sea Grant and symposium steering committee member. “We will reflect on how this sensitive group of fishes may be affected by climate change and other human-induced challenges.”

In addition to sharing new research on charr, the symposium will create a forum for networking and developing research collaborations. Organizers plan to publish a proceedings of the symposium in a special issue of the journal *Hydrobiologia* and selected sessions will be used in a forthcoming book on lake trout.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Symposium website: <http://charr.glfc.org/#home>
- Registration: <http://charr.glfc.org/#register>
- Past symposia: The symposium began in Winnipeg, Canada in 1981 and has been held in Sapporo, Japan (1988), Trondheim, Norway (1994), Trois-Rivières, Canada (2000), Reykjavik, Iceland (2006), Stirling, Scotland (2009), Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia (2012), and Tromsø, Norway (2015). In 2018, the symposium will take place for the first time in the United States.



PHOTO INFORMATION:

1. A school of arctic charr in a high-altitude lake in the Austrian Alps [top image].
Credit: Paul Vecsei, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
2. Don Schreiner, right, and fishing buddies Jeff Schuldt and dog Raven catching Lake Charr (trout) on Lake Superior near Two Harbors, September 2016 [middle image].
Credit: Courtesy Don Schreiner/Minnesota Sea Grant
3. Great Lakes Fishery Commission Science Director Andrew Muir holding a giant lake charr *Salvelinus namaycush* from Great Bear Lake, Northwest Territories, Canada, year unknown [bottom image].
Credit: Paul Vecsei, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.