



Great Lakes Fishery Commission

**For Immediate Release
October 23, 2024**

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Great Lakes Fishery Commission and Cranbrook Institute of Science to Host Event Celebrating New Sea Lamprey Display, Screen Award-Winning Documentary

Bloomfield Hills, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) and Cranbrook Institute of Science will be hosting an event on Saturday November 2 to celebrate the installation of a new sea lamprey display at the museum (1 Institute Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI) and screen the Commission’s award-winning documentary, *THE FISH THIEF: A Great Lakes Mystery*. The event will begin at 11:00am with a variety of hands-on activities and conclude with a screening of *THE FISH THIEF* at 2:30pm, followed by a Q&A. The event is free with admission to the museum.

The celebration event will be held at the Science Stop, which will be the new long-term residence for the museum’s sea lampreys. Guests attending the event will have the opportunity to interact with live sea lampreys, hear about their impacts on Great Lakes fish and the science behind the control efforts from a Commission expert, and complete various sea lamprey-activities such as making a sea lamprey papercraft. Other activities available include designing a device to remove garbage from the Great Lakes and following Fred the Fish as he travels down the stream in an interactive journey. Following the screening of *THE FISH THIEF*, there will be a Q&A with the film’s director.

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: sea lampreys. 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, and Indigenous communities in Canada and the United States. In the face of the catastrophe, a tenacious group of scientists fought back and worked for years, tirelessly searching for a way to control the destructive species. 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 a 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



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Indigenous communities, 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 the remarkable story of an existential threat to our fishery—the devastation caused by invasive sea lampreys and the relentless effort of scientists, fishers, and politicians to find a solution,” said Dr. Marc Gaden, the Commission’s executive secretary. “Sea lamprey control was a turning point for our region.” Gaden continued, “Sea lamprey control gave managers the ability to restore our fisheries and those fisheries brought people back to the Great Lakes. Without ongoing sea lamprey control we would not have the bustling \$6 billion fishery that we enjoy today. This film is an exciting, good news story of how people overcame near total loss on one of the greatest resources on the planet.”

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 of this exciting story before it is widely released. Learn more about the film and see the trailer at <http://thefishthief.com/>.

The new sea lamprey display will remain at the Cranbrook Institute of Science for the foreseeable future; however, the Science Stop is only open on weekends and for special events. Plan your visit to the museum, including purchasing advanced tickets at <https://science.cranbrook.edu/>.



Left: Anglers enjoy a day on the lake. Photo: Lindsey Haskin.



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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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