

9-6-25 MWS Manistee K-SB and Pier event Recap

Hello MWS Members & Friends,

Last Saturday we were able to hold the Manistee Kayak-Small Boat and pier fishing events in spite of the wind & rain forecasts. Saturday started out a bit chilly at 46 F w/ the winds 16+ mph out of the West. As the morning progressed the winds shifted more out of the NW exposing us to a bit more wind than we would have liked, but still doable w/ waves on Manistee Lake at less than 1 ft. A few little black clouds gave us a spritz from time to time but nothing to make you want to give up for the day.

Jeremy Kenward arrived just before daybreak and paddled the 3.5 miles from the Stronach boat ramp back North to the Manistee lake entrance to the Downtown river section. The competition for jigging space was intense w/ little to no room for trolling. Jeremy did report seeing four nets in that section of the lake that morning, but none were seen in the southern half of the lake until 10:45am.

Michelle Braden had grown weary of working a school of fish that I had found over at the pulp plant and been working most of the morning. She decided it was time for a bait change and to head back to the meat hole just downstream of the mouth of the Little Manistee river. Boats had been jigging this location all morning so we had stayed just outside of their range w/ trolling efforts. I got a call on my cell about 10:45a from Michelle that she had one on. Our two way radios hadn't worked and she was a bit frustrated having to dig out her phone and dial me up to be net man while trying to wear down a non compliant king. I was about 300 yards away and still needed to reel in all my gear, so of course she had plenty of time to contemplate losing the fish.

When I arrived the nice 14# hen still had plenty of steam as she spun Michelles Kayak and went under mine several more times before she slid into our folding net (BIG FUN!). After landing Mitchell's fish we headed over to the ramp where a number of the MWS folks and others had taken up viewing the unorchestrated chaos. We took a few pics and got a weight. The catch renewed enthusiasm for the hour plus remaining in the first event. Everyone headed back out and hit it hard, but no further hookups were to be had.

We pulled lines about 1pm and put together a nice lunch at the ramp of Hamburgers on the grill w/ all the trimmings, baked beans, potato salad, fresh melons & cookies. A word of warning to those wanting to use the picnic table chained to the maple tree (The chain has grown between the multiple trees growing from the base. this has pulled one end of the table legs up on the roots. This makes the table a bit of a challenge to maintain balance when all the folks on one side decide to leave the others on the other side to figure out the possible balancing options (More Big Fun!)).

After lunch the Group had the options to finish the afternoon out w/ Naps, exploring or more kayak fishing out of Stronach, before the 2nd event was to start out on the Manistee pier at 5:30pm.

Michelle had already shown me that I definitely need more time on the water so back to the Ludington Chouse we went and done for the day we were. Gus Nelson, Jeremy Kenward and Tom Coleman hit the pier for a beautiful sunset and comradery w/ 50+ other spoon pitchers. There were reports of three fish landed out by the end of the pier, but no hits for team MWS.

Sunday brought another better than breezy day w/ temps a bit warmer than Saturday, but not by much. The winds were straight out of the North in the upper teens that built up to the low 20's by midday.

Jeremy hit the water before daybreak once again and confirmed the early bite to be the best based upon adjacent angler nets. Gus & I arrived at the Public land across from the South Pier parking lot just before 8am and headed south.

Gus made his first pass next to the first dredging boat. I noticed him reach for his right rod that had doubled over when a silver bullet King launched 3 ft out of the water just about 10' to my starboard (That was way too cool!!). After a couple more jumps I heard Gus say that this fish was taking him for a drag as the pair headed toward OXY-Chem off to the east. I sped up to get out of the way. Gus had a blast for maybe several minutes before the middle hook split ring straightened out on his fire tiger thunderstick ending the battle. We all did loops around that south end of PM lake for the rest of the AM marking two healthy schools. Right about 11AM Jeremy scored a hard strike after thinking to himself "just one more pass" (for the second time). Gus & I had already turned North to head back to the launch site so we missed the whole event. Jeremy had no problem catching us just before we landed though being totally pumped w/ his latest catch.

Upon comparing notes for the weekend while loading up Jeremy confirmed that his second King in PM lake for 2025 came on the same three way rig as used earlier. Also using the same spoon, and near the same time of 11am. The crazy thing was that the fish Michelle had caught on Saturday was using the same UV Purple/Pink Thunder Stick and in the same spot and time of 11am as three years before. It appears there may be a second bite, say after 10:30am just for future ref.

All in all another fantastic weekend on the water doing battle w/ feisty kings in small watercraft!

There is one more Kayak-Small Boat chinook salmon event (9/27 also at the Stronach boat ramp on Lake Manistee, refer to the forthcoming Keith Childs Invite). There are also two Beach/Pier Steelhead events yet in 2025 (10/18 Ludington and 11/1 Manistee).



Looking forward to more folks joining in on all the fun!!
Eric Braden

