

Looking back: The Siscowit *

The following is an excerpt from the series "The Fishes of Isle Royale" by Stanley Siverston, Washington Harbor. This excerpt was originally published in the February 1958 edition of The Wolf's Eye.

The Siscowit is in the trout family, but is such a fat fish that its flesh cannot be fried or broiled. When heated in a frying pan or broiler, a genuine Siscowit will turn into a liquid oil except for skin, bones and fins.

The Siscowit often weighs as much as 35 pounds and spends some time each year in the same strata of water as the lean trout, although much of the time is spent in deeper water than the regular trout. The Siscowit will live a great part of his life in waters as deep as 700 feet, with heaviest concentrations at about 400 to 600 feet.



Photo courtesy of MSU Extension

Despite the fact that it is regarded as a very deep water fish, they will rise to the surface occasionally during June or July to feed on bugs, moths, flies, etc. When on the bottom of the lake in deep water, they feed on stonerollers, small shiners, ciscoes and bloccats.

Siscowits are rarely caught on troll, probably because they are not as fast as the lean Lake Trout. Should an angler be successful in catching a large Siscowit, he would have a nice trophy for mounting, but a very poor meal for his table, unless he were to salt and smoke it in a special manner.

The large, fat Siscowit is sought after by certain nationalities in the eastern United States, mostly in the New York Area. There they have a process for smoking this fat fish, which evidently makes it quite tasty.

However, I have as yet to find anyone who knows just what kind of smoking process this fish is put through.

* We are using the spelling from Siverston's original article. However, most current references use Siscowet as the correct spelling.

Executive Director's Report by Mark Wilcox

The myth of the off season

There is a misconception that with anything that is seasonal, it stands to reason there is an off season. You know, that time when there is nothing to do but sit around waiting for a return to Daylight Saving Time.

After my first full year at IRKPA, I can assure you the off season is a myth. At both of our national parks it seems the moment things get packed up and stored from the previous season, work begins on preparing for the upcoming season.



This is certainly true here at IRKPA. There is no "down time." Sharon Kisiel, our retail manager, has been quite busy this winter. She re-vamped our inventory system and has been aggressively re-ordering many of our popular items while always on the lookout for new products.

Thanks to the work of our publications committee, led by Marilyn Cooper, we'll see both an old and a new publication on the shelves of our four gift shops this summer. We are currently in the process of proofing the sixth printing of "The Diary of an Isle Royale School Teacher," by Dorothy Simonson. We expect to have new copies of this favorite on the shelves when the summer season begins. Be on the lookout for an interesting new publication. We are currently in the process of producing transcriptions of logbooks from Menagerie Island Light House. These logbooks provide an inside look at the vital, but lonely, occupation of lighthouse keepers on Lake Superior.

Two of our most popular workshops are back for 2023, unfortunately the Isle Royale Night Sky Photography Workshop and the Isle Royale Botany are both sold out. And finally plans are underway for another invasive species removal service trip to Isle Royale (see last page) and we're in the planning stages of a service trip that involves Keweenaw National Historical Park. We'll have our next issue of The Wolf's Eye coming up in May.

KEWE & IRKPA Collaborate for Community Outreach

Last fall, the Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association (IRKPA) and Keweenaw National Historical Park (KEWE) worked together to provide exceptional visitor experiences at community events in downtown Calumet.

The first was Trunk-or-Treat in late October. This event brought visitors and residents into downtown Calumet to enjoy an evening of safe "trunk-or-treating" along with entertainment and family fun.

Park rangers and IRKPA staff decorated a table outside the Calumet Visitor Center to give out candy, stickers, pencils and other fun Halloween treats. Their effort was rewarded by visits from Superman, Captain America, dinosaurs, pirates, fairies, witches and many others among the costumed crowds.

In mid-November the IRKPA gift shop and the Calumet Visitor Center joined local establishments in the annual Ladies Day Out holiday shopping event with special evening hours. This event grows more popular each year.

In December, Christmas in Calumet celebrations once again brought visitors and local residents into the heart of Historic Calumet Village for traditional celebrations.

The park joined in the holiday cheer with holiday decorations in the Keweenaw NHP visitor center, live music and costumed "living window displays" in partnership with Friends of Fashion.



Sharon Kiesel Photo

Deb Kinzi, Friends of Fashion volunteer, participates in the Living Windows program at the Calumet Visitor Center

Visitors were invited to step in from the cold for a chance to shop, speak to the historically costumed models in the windows, enjoy the music, and create holiday cards using images from park archives.

Hoduski Retires after more than three decades of service

After more than 36 years, Brian Hoduski is enjoying his well-earned retirement. He has been a valued member of the Keweenaw National Historical Park museum staff since in 1999. While Curator, Brian led the effort to establish the Lake Superior Collection Management Center (LSCMC), a multi-park curatorial facility to house the collections of Keweenaw NHP, Isle Royale National Park, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. The LSCMC was made formal in 2013, consolidating the

care for the museum and archival collections of the three parks and establishing a board to govern operations.

Brian continued to work to assure that there would be a facility to house these materials. Construction of that facility, in the restored Calumet and Hecla Warehouse No. 1 will begin in 2025.

The facility will be a model for multi-park collections facilities, curatorial programs, and archival refer-

ence programs across the agency.

Brian began his career with the National Park Service in 1986 as a park ranger on the waters of Ozark National Scenic Riverways. He gave thousands of tours of the house at Harry S. Truman National Historic Site, and worked as a ranger and EMT at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. His passion for protecting the fabric of our National Parks for the future of those present and those to come will live on in the LSCMC.

Update from Isle Royale National Park

The Cultural Resources Plan/Environmental Assessment is done and implementation can begin. Partnerships will be critical to success. The Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact are available at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/ISROcrmp>. Elements of the plan include:

- ◆ Emphasis on restoration of historic structures and cultural landscapes
- ◆ Additional visitor opportunities, such as volunteer work and access to cultural landscapes
- ◆ Increased efforts to document and understand the use and importance of Ojibwe fishing and lifeways at Isle Royale. Work with tribes to enhance or revive relationships with Isle Royale.
- ◆ Adaptive reuse of historic structures and cultural landscapes on Barnum and Washington Islands
- ◆ Restoration of the historic Rock Harbor Guesthouse to function as a hostel or similar overnight lodging facility. (Planning already underway for the restoration)
- ◆ Establishment of scientific and/or demonstration fisheries at the Edisen Fishery and Washington Island
- ◆ Support for transfer of ownership of the Isle Royale and Passage Island Lighthouses from the US Coast Guard to the NPS
- ◆ Restoration and rehabilitation of landscapes, exteriors, and interiors of all four lighthouses to allow and encourage visitor access
- ◆ Enhanced interpretation of historic copper mining sites
- ◆ Research information gaps in the Park's archeological record

- ◆ Development of the Lake Superior Collections Management Center in Calumet, Michigan, as a multi-park museum storage and research facility, to include Isle Royale museum collections.

WSP/EIS: The Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement is in progress. The current schedule calls for a draft available for public review by June 1 with public meetings the week of June 19-24.

Decarbonization Effort: Isle Royale is one of five Great Lakes parks to begin a decarbonization effort with the National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation. The goals of the project are to replace fossil fuel consumption with solar, batteries, heat pumps, and other proven off the shelf technology, to cut carbon pollution from park facilities and vehicles, and to pursue net-zero energy consumption.

Winter Research Program Update: Personnel made it to the island Jan 20. Partners assisting with this year's research and monitoring program include the US Forest Service, Grand Portage Band of Chippewa, Michigan Tech University, Michigan State University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Helicopter Wildlife Services and Sawtooth Aviation.

Many projects are taking place with partners: moose abundance and distribution surveys (MTU/Grand Portage/NPS/MSU), seasonal dynamics of suppression and facilitation in carnivore communities (UW-Madison/NPS), snowshoe hare population viability assessment and predator/prey dynamics (UW-Madison/NPS), moose capture/collaring (Grand Portage/NPS/MSU), wolf capture/collaring (Grand Portage/NPS/MSU), winter

browse of Balsam Fir (MTU), mammal occurrence and counts (fox, otter, hare, marten) (MTU), and wolf midwinter kill rate estimation (MTU).

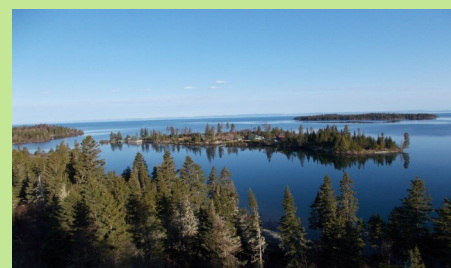
Ranger III Update: The Ranger III will make public trips to Windigo again this summer on June 13/14, July 11/12, and August 8/9. New this year, Ranger III may carry up to three private boats on each trip.

The Ranger III will go for mandatory five-year dry dock when the season wraps up this fall. The design contract for a Ranger IV will be awarded this winter. The Design phase is estimated to take one year.

Rock Harbor Auditorium Exhibits: In 2023 we'll install an artist in residence exhibit, a marine debris exhibit (NOAA funded) to be added in 2024. The 2023 Greenstone newspaper theme is partnerships and will feature 5-7 of our partners. Opening date for the Houghton Visitor Center is April 17.

World Premiere: The Pine Mountain Music Festival will include one or more world premiere string quartet performances on the island the week of June 6-9. String quartet compositions were commissioned for the park's 80th anniversary in 2020, but performances were canceled due to COVID-19..

Flag Raising: On June 14 there will be a joint ceremony with the Grand Portage tribe to raise its tribal flag at Rock Harbor.





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IRKPA is the membership-based nonprofit partner of Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historical Park. Gifts, bequests, memorials, and membership are U.S. tax deductible.

Membership Categories

Individual \$25	Household \$35	Supporting \$50
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Visit: <https://www.iGive.com/kCQIZPB>

Invasive Species Removal Service Trip

IRKPA is planning another invasive species removal field trip to Isle Royale this summer. There are five spaces open for volunteers to participate.

New this year, the trip is only open to members who did not participate in the trip last year.

More information will be coming soon. If you would like your name added to the potential trip list, email Sandy Wilhoit at upnorthigo@aol.com