**Reviewer: 2**

Comments to the Author

The management brief entitled “Age, year-class strength variability, and partial age validation of Coregonus kiyi from Lake Superior” has been revised appropriately and all major concerns have been addressed. I feel that the manuscript has been improved substantially.

By adding one additional scale reader, I feel that the authors have adequately addressed the concern that only one reader estimated scale ages in the study. I believe this has improved the quality of the manuscript. Admittedly, I am still puzzled by the authors’ reluctance to use the full data set, a suggestion I made in my initial review of the brief. I was not clear in my second-round review by using the phrase “similar number of scales and otoliths.” My intention was to point out that the same number of scales and otoliths should be read because, as the author has indicated, these are paired structures. In fact, in their rebuttal, the authors state that “to compare scales and otoliths, there must be the same number of scales and otoliths read as they are paired observations.” In my first round review of this brief, I indicated that if the full data set was available (i.e., all scales and otoliths from all 288 fish) using all of these observations to compare otolith and scale ages would build a much stronger case than using a subset of scale ages. Again, I feel the manuscript has been improved but want to be clear in my purpose for bringing this up.

By addressing the length frequency analysis in the discussion the authors have sufficiently addressed my concern with potentially lumping age classes.

**RESPONSE:** We thank the reviewer for clarifying his/her previous comment.

**Associate Editor Comments to the Author:**

Comments to the Author:

I commend the authors for improving their manuscript. The reviewer and I have found that our concerns have been addressed. I thank you for bolstering your methods to address my last round of critiques. I do want to provide a few, final and minor suggestions for edits that should be easy to do:

lines 20 and 199: Suggest re-word slightly to avoid the noun train, "Kiyi length frequency data"

**RESPONSE:** Done.

Fig. 1: Consider omitting, 'were collected in 2014'--I believe this is already implicit.

**RESPONSE:** Partially done. We omitted “in 2014” but left “were collected”.

Fig. 2: I should've mentioned this last time. I appreciate the inclusion of this figure; I think it is incredibly informative and useful.

**RESPONSE:** Thank you.

Fig. 3: Caption: Please cite '(Figure 1)' after indication of the 'eastern Michigan region'

**RESPONSE:** Done.

Line 56: Citations of Maceina and Quist are adequate. Please consider also including citation(s) of ageing work done on lake whitefish by Andrew Muir et al. People searching his papers may be more likely to find yours in this connection.

**RESPONSE:** We did not add the Muir et al. papers here. The Maceina and Quist citations are meant to illustrate that this is a general phenomenon. Adding Muir et al. would provide a specific example that would either lead to more specific examples or a question from the readers about why there are not other specific examples. We did cite one Muir et al. paper in the discussion and we have now added reference to a second Muir et al. paper in the discussion. Thus, we think that people searching for his papers will still be more likely to find our paper, even without the suggested mention in the introduction.

Note that this resulted in slightly new wording in the paragraph in the discussion that begins with “Kiyi ages estimated from otoliths” (near line 230).

We also thank the AE for bring to our attention that we had missed the second Muir et al. paper. We were certainly aware of it and it was an oversight on our part not to include it.

Line 117: In literally 1-3 words each, please define what constitutes 'considerable' vs. 'little' previous experience in estimating ages.

**RESPONSE:** Done.

lines 128-129: How many fish were removed from the analysis?

**RESPONSE:** We ended up reaching a consensus on all fish; thus, no fish were removed from the analysis. This is now reflected in the manuscript (see last sentence of the paragraph in the methods that begins with “Two readers, who were blind to” (near line 125).

Lines 227-232: Consider including citation(s) from lake whitefish work by Andrew Muir et al.

**RESPONSE:** Done and response to previous comment about line 56.