

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

LA CROSSE FISH HEALTH CENTER

April Station Highlights



The La Crosse Fish Health Center (LFHC) is located in Onalaska, Wisconsin and is responsible for fish health management within the Big Rivers/Great Lakes region of the upper Midwest. Primary responsibilities include inspection, certification and diagnostic services for federal hatcheries, providing inspection and laboratory services for state, federal and tribal agencies, surveillance of target pathogens as part of the National Wild Fish Health Survey, providing training in fish health management, monitoring use of drugs and chemicals for national fish hatchery use, researching fish health management and assisting in design and implementation of surveillance, and control of invasive aquatic pathogens in cooperation with state, tribal, federal and non-governmental agencies.

LABORATORY TESTING SERVICES

The La Crosse Fish Health Center provided laboratory testing services in April to: the Keweenaw Bay Tribal Fish hatchery, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia surveillance), the Upper Mississippi River Environmental Sciences Center, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (Senecaville, Hebron, Kincaid and London state fish hatcheries), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Jake Wolf Memorial and Little Grassy state fish hatcheries), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia surveillance) and the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery. (by Julie Teskie)



AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Wild Fish Health Survey Takes Place on the Mississippi River

The La Crosse Fish Health Center has completed its 12th annual Wild Fish Health Survey on Pool 9 of the Upper Mississippi River in March and April of this year. Over 500 fish, representing 10 species were sampled for serious viruses and bacteria.

This project generates long term data from the Upper Mississippi River that can be used to track the distribution and pathogenesis of fish pathogens. A major concern in Region 3 is Viral Septicemia Virus (VHSV). To date, VHSV has not been detected in the Mississippi River watershed. The Fish Health Center also monitors the status of Large Mouth Bass Viremia (SVCV), which have already been detected in the River.



Eric Leis and Terrence Ott sampling wild fish at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery. (Photo by Sarah Bauer)

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The Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) assisted with collection of the fish in conjunction with their spring netting of walleye and northern pike. Walleye and pike are spawned on the Mississippi River and taken back to the hatchery to be reared. These fish and others from the river are used for a variety of stocking and freshwater mussel restoration and recovery projects. The Fish Health Center screens the wild brood stock to ensure pathogen free fish are used for hatchery projects (by Corey Puzach).



Environmental Facility Compliance and Safety Audit at the La Crosse Fish Health Center



On April 16, 2008 an environmental facility compliance and safety audit was conducted at the La Crosse Fish Health Center by the Region 3 safety audit team of John Hoffman and Craig Nibbe. The purpose of the environmental audit was to determine the degree of compliance in 11 major environmental categories. The audit findings were minimal at the Fish Health Center and all finding types were intended to improve facility operations. The limited number of findings were under the hazardous materials and solid waste management category.

The purpose of the safety audit was to make certain government facilities comply with OSHA safety and occupational health regulations to protect federal employees and the visiting public from personal injury. The audit team identified the following safety findings: (1) designate a smoking area for building occupants and visiting public, (2) install ground fault interrupters for electrical outlets near wash basins, (3) update sharps plan and COOP plan and (4) replace a battery in the emergency light outside the bacteriology lab. (by Terry Ott)

PUBLIC USE

La Crosse Fish Health Center Volunteers with the La Crosse Boys and Girls Club

On Friday, April 18, 2008, Kristen Dziubinski of the La Crosse Fish Health Center volunteered at the La Crosse Boys and Girls Club. Kristen taught youngsters about basic fish anatomy and physiology using a rainbow trout, the students at the Boys and Girls Club also learned about the procedures used to test fish for pathogens. To learn about external anatomy, the students were asked to point out the eyes, fins, gills, skin, anus and notice the slime fish



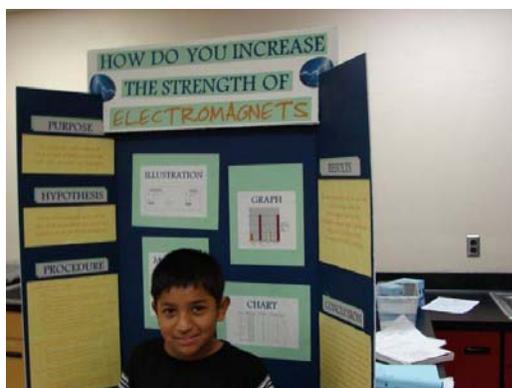
secreted when stressed.

After Kristen explained the external organs of the trout, the internal organs were examined. The trout was opened and students were asked questions about what they observed. Many of the students were excited and anxious to see and touch the inside of the fish using gloves. For almost all of the students, it was the first time ever holding a fish. Kristen discussed the basic internal anatomy such as the stomach, intestine, swim bladder, spleen and kidney. The swim bladders were still intact which gave the students the opportunity to pop them. After the spleen, intestine, stomach, swim bladder, kidney and feces were pointed out, the volunteers gave the students the opportunity to mention any other anatomy they wanted to see. The eye, brain and heart were the most mentioned and then observed. The eye was viewed under a dissecting microscope to distinguish finer details.

In addition to anatomy, Kristen explained the procedures used to treat sick Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) at the fish health center. The students were told that the bacteriology laboratory uses Tryptic Soy Agar (TSA) to grow bacteria from the fish and given loops to sample the fish. TSA slants and plates were then streaked using the loops. It was a fun time and the students at the Boys and Girls Club enjoyed learning about the anatomy and health of Rainbow trout (by Kristen Dziubinski)

Fish and Wildlife Employees Judge Math and Science Expo

On April 16th the annual Math and Science Expo was held at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, WI. There were 480 science and math projects on display from 6th through 8th grade students from 15 local schools.



Bill Thrune of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (La Crosse District) and Ryan Katona, Eric Leis and Sarah Bauer of the La Crosse Fish Health Center volunteered to be reviewers for this event.

The student displays covered a wide array of topics such as electromagnetism, Chinese water torture, effectiveness of stain removers and soaps, building hover crafts, green fuels, and toxicity tolerance of plants. The objective of the Science Expo is to teach students about the scientific method. The day appeared to be a success as the students enthusiastically explained their projects (by Sarah Bauer).