



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Midwest Region

Fisheries Program

fish lines



**Monitoring the Big
Friendly Giants**

**You Can Swim...But
You Can't Hide!**

**Fifth Season of Mass
Marking Field Collections**

Acoustic Telemetry Tagging

**Chasing Dragonflies in
Lockport Prairie**





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Menge Creek located in the State of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is a high quality cold water trout stream that flows ...[Read More](#)

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Monitoring the Big Friendly Giants



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Fifth Season of Mass Marking Field Collections



Acoustic Telemetry Tagging



Chasing Dragonflies in Lockport Prairie

Fish Tails

"[Fish Tails](#)" refers to articles that are submitted by field staff that do not appear as a feature in the current edition of Fish Lines. These articles provide examples of the diverse work that the Service's Midwest Fisheries Program and partners perform on behalf of our aquatic resources and for the benefit of the American public.

Field Notes

"[Field Notes](#)" is an online searchable database that showcases hundreds of employee-written summaries of field activities and accomplishments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from across the nation.

Last updated: August 25, 2016



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fisheries, Midwest Region

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Monitoring the Big Friendly Giants of the St. Clair – Detroit River System

BY ANDREW BRIGGS, ALPENA FWCO – WATERFORD, MI SUBSTATION



Lisa Kaulfersch, Jennifer Johnson, and Andrew Briggs of the Alpena FWCO – Waterford Substation with lake sturgeon captured during setline assessments on the Detroit River. Credit: USFWS

Lake sturgeon are often referred to as the “gentle giants” of the Great Lakes due to their ability to reach great lengths (over seven feet) and their docile nature. However, lake sturgeon are threatened or endangered in much of their range, including the Great Lakes. In the St. Clair – Detroit River System, much of the lake sturgeon spawning habitat was removed when the system was dredged to make way for commercial shipping traffic. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and many partners have worked in collaboration to construct artificial spawning reefs in the SCDRS to restore lost habitat and native species within this system.

The Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office – Waterford Substation has been monitoring the lake sturgeon population in the St. Clair – Detroit River System since 2002. Lake sturgeon are captured with setlines, a long line that is anchored to the bottom and hooks baited with dead round gobies. Once captured, the lake sturgeon are measured, weighed, and tagged with an external floy tag and an internal Passive Integrated Transponder tag, similar to the tags you may give your pets. They are also checked for sex by observing expressed gametes or through

the use of a portable ultrasound, and they have a section of their fin ray removed for aging and genetic analysis purposes.

These surveys allow the Service to keep track of the lake sturgeon population size in the system and to evaluate the success of the habitat rehabilitation projects like the artificial spawning reefs currently being constructed.



A 112 Pounder!-- Brandon Harris and Andrew Briggs of the Alpena FWCO – Waterford Substation hang on to the largest lake sturgeon captured in the Detroit River during 2016 setline assessments. Credit: USFWS

This year, the

Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office – Waterford Substation captured 78 lake sturgeon in the Detroit River and 75 lake sturgeon in southern Lake Huron near the confluence with the St. Clair River. Of these fish, four were recaptures in the Detroit River and nine were recaptures in southern Lake Huron. The proportion of newly tagged fish to recaptured fish is what is used by the Service biologists to calculate the population size at each location. The largest lake sturgeon captured this year included a 70 inch, 112 pounder in the Detroit River and a 71 inch, 99 pounder from southern Lake Huron.



Fish biologist Justin Chiotti of the Alpena FWCO – Waterford Substation and volunteers from Michigan Technological University and University of Windsor enjoying their work during setline assessments in southern Lake Huron. Credit: USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fisheries, Midwest Region

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You Can Swim...But You Can't Hide! Using Sonar to Evaluate Fish Movement on the Upper Miss

BY JENNA MERRY, LA CROSSE FWCO



Biologist Jenna Merry holds the ARIS camera, which will be attached to a boat to collect data at Lock 19. Credit: Mark Cornish, USACE

1913 and updated in 1957, it is a hydroelectric dam and is one of the largest water control structures on the Mississippi River. Its enormous lock chamber is 1200 feet long by 110 feet wide and the dam features 119 sliding gates. The vertical lift in the lock is 38.2 feet making it the second highest on the Upper Mississippi River. With these impressive characteristics, Lock and Dam 19 has served as a bottleneck for the mass movement of Asian carp because, unlike many of the other lock and dam locations on the Mississippi River, it is believed that passage through the structure can only be achieved through the lock chamber and not through the gate system. Due to its ability to restrict upstream passage, Lock 19 is being considered as a location to implement fish deterrent technology, such as a speaker system. However, in order to choose the most effective placement of deterrent technology, there is a need to first observe and evaluate how fish utilize and behave in and around the lock structures. Cue the ARIS.

La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office put its high tech sonar camera to good use this year for a new project that takes a look at the underwater lives of fish at Lock 19 on the Upper Mississippi River. This sonar device isn't just your everyday fish finder though; it is an Adaptive Resolution Imaging Sonar (ARIS) and is every fisherman's dream. The ARIS uses sound waves to create a real-time picture of objects and habitat, however instead of having one or two sound beams like most recreational fish finders, the ARIS has 128 allowing it to create much more detailed, video-like images. Because the ARIS uses sound to capture imagery, rather than light like a video camera, fish and objects can be observed even in pitch-black, deep water. These particular qualities of the ARIS make it the perfect instrument to use to evaluate the movements and behaviors of fish in the lock chamber at Lock and Dam 19 in Keokuk, Iowa.

Lock and Dam 19 has been an important structure in slowing the upstream progression of Asian carp populations in the Upper Mississippi River. Built in



Biologist Jeremiah Davis collects ARIS imagery in the field at Lock 19. Credit: Jenna Merry, USFWS

The objective of the ARIS project is to collect this data about fish behavior. Specifically we aim to identify the key areas of fish congregation in and around the lock and evaluate the movement patterns of fish in and out of the chamber gates and ports.

ARIS imagery for this project was collected in April, May, and June of 2016, which typically corresponds to the time of the year when river levels are



USFWS crew collects ARIS imagery inside the lock chamber.
Credit: James Lamer, WIU

spawning. This would be the most likely window of time that the majority of Asian carp would be triggered to move upstream and congregate near, and attempt to pass through the lock.

A thorough review of the imagery data will identify behavior and movement patterns of fish in and around the lock. The results will help advise future implementation of deterrent technology at Lock 19 and the ARIS could then potentially be used to further evaluate the effectiveness of that technology once it is implemented.

rising and water temperatures reach the desired threshold for Asian carp



ARIS imagery of an underwater grate inside Lock 19. (Note the near-photo quality). Credit: Jenna Merry, USFWS



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Green Bay FWCO - Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory Fifth Season of Mass Marking Field Collections

BY KEVIN PANKOW, GREEN BAY FWCO

The Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory began its fifth season assisting state agencies around Lakes Michigan and Huron in recovering coded-wire tags (CWTs) and collecting biological data on sport-caught salmon and trout. The data and tag recovery efforts are part of the Great Lakes Mass Marking program, a collaboration among federal, state and tribal agencies designed to determine levels of natural reproduction of lake trout and Chinook salmon, their movement patterns and survival, and the relative contributions of salmon and trout stocked at different locations to the fishery.

Through this program, the Lab operates four automated tagging trailers at state and federal hatcheries to ensure all Chinook salmon and lake trout stocked into Lakes Michigan and Huron receive adipose fin clips and CWTs injected into the snout. Each CWT is a 1.1 mm long piece of stainless steel wire with a laser-etched numerical code specific to a group of fish with the same stocking location, genetic strain, year class, and hatchery of origin. The clipped adipose fin identifies hatchery-reared fish and indicates the presence of a CWT.



Service technicians Tyler Lueck (right) and Caitlin McNamara (left) collect data on a sport caught salmon at Port Washington, Wisconsin. Credit: Kevin Pankow, USFWS



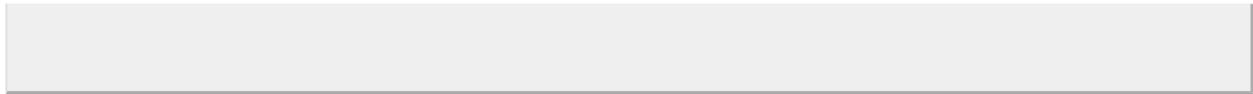
Service Technician Barrett Warmbein prepares to record data on a sport caught lake trout at South Haven, Michigan. Credit: Kevin Pankow, USFWS

In 2016, the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Lab hired 11 biological technicians to assist state partners in recovering CWTs and collecting biological data from fish landed by anglers from April to October at boat landings, cleaning stations, and fishing tournaments, and from fish captured at state-operated weirs during fall spawning runs. Last year, Service technicians collected data on 21,080 angler-caught fish, including 8,938 Chinook salmon and 6,455 lake trout. Another 2,302 Chinook salmon were collected from weirs. The Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Lab coordinates data collection efforts and advises technicians assisting Departments of Natural Resources in Indiana (Michigan City), Wisconsin (Sturgeon Bay and Milwaukee), Illinois (Zion) and Michigan (Charlevoix and Alpena).

The 2016 field season began in Michigan City, Indiana on April 15th. Over the course of eight weeks, six teams were trained on several field collection protocols. The technicians received hands-on training in identifying salmon and trout species; collecting basic biological data such as fish length, weight, sex and maturity; collecting aging structures including otoliths (ear bones), scales, and maxillae (jaw straps); determining the presence or absence of CWTs and various fin clips; and identifying different types of sea lamprey wounds. Snouts containing CWTs will be collected, extracted and read throughout the summer and fall. The information contained in the CWTs are then coupled with the biological data collected by the technicians and stored in a database for analysis.

The Lab is also using its lake-wide sampling network to collaborate additional studies. Tissues, consisting of a dorsal muscle tissue, belly tissue, and stomachs, will be collected from Lake Michigan salmonines (Chinook salmon, lake trout, rainbow trout/steelhead, brown trout and coho salmon) to help understand how predators are adapting to a changing forage base. This study will be done in collaboration with the

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Illinois Natural History Survey and Purdue University. In addition, otoliths from rainbow trout/steelhead will be collected for a study to estimate the proportion of wild Lake Michigan rainbow trout that originate from different tributaries. Otolith microchemistry, which detects chemical "fingerprints" present in the otolith and the environment, will be used to determine the natal stream or region from which the wild fish were hatched. By performing this analysis throughout various times of the year, we will gain insight into where those fish move throughout the summer and fall. This study will be done in collaboration with Central Michigan University and Michigan Department of Natural Resources.



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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fisheries, Midwest Region

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Acoustic Telemetry Tagging Helps FWS Monitor Asian Carp Movement in Ohio River

BY SHELBY KAIL, CARTERVILLE FWCO



USFWS biologists Neil Gillespie and Jeffrey Jolley retrieve an Asian Carp captured in a gill net with the assistance of Wyatt Snodgrass of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Credit: Lucas Shea, USFWS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) personnel at the Cartersville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) have recently wrapped up their Summer 2016 Adult Asian Carp Acoustic Tagging season as a part of the Asian Carp Early Detection and Monitoring Program. FWCO staff utilized methods such as boat electrofishing and gill netting to capture silver carp and bighead carp in the Ohio River and its tributaries to then surgically implant with acoustic telemetry tags. These tags along with acoustic receivers installed in the waterways earlier this year will provide FWS Biologists and state agencies with valuable information on the movements of Asian Carp within the Ohio River System that inform will decisions for reducing the impact of those Asian Carp on our waterways.

Personnel from the Cartersville FWCO have traveled across four states and overcame the difficulties of capturing the large and jumpy fish, tagging a total of 195 silver carp and bighead carp. That is over half the tagging goal for the Summer 2016 season and Fall 2016 season



Olivea Mendenhall, USFWS biological technician, applying a jaw tag to a silver carp with the assistance of Neil Gillespie, USFWS biologist, on the Great Miami River. Credit: Shelby Kail, USFWS

combined! All of this could not have been accomplished without the assistance of our collaborators from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Kentucky DNR, West Virginia DNR, and Indiana DNR. With this season wrapped up, we are now gearing up to resume adult asian carp acoustic tagging in the fall. Cartersville FWCO staff are now focused on repairing of gill nets as well as improving and modifying electrofishing equipment to better capture the large and lively silver carp and bighead carp.



USFWS biological technician, Olivea Mendenhall, performs surgery on a silver carp to insert acoustic tag with the assistance of Neil Gillespie, USFWS Biologist on the Great Miami River. Credit: Shelby Kail, USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fisheries, Midwest Region

Conserving America's Fisheries

Chasing Dragonflies in Lockport Prairie

BY ERIN JOHNSON, GENOA NFH



South Dakota University partners Dan and Tristin Soluk looking for foraging Hines emerald dragonflies in Lockport Prairie. Credit: USFWS

This summer Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) staff had the opportunity to travel to the Des Plains area near Chicago, Illinois for a Hines emerald dragonfly (HED) egg collection. Egg collection can be done a couple different ways. The standard method is catching the dragonflies in a fine mesh net. Another method involves placing a net into a shallow pocket of water where the adult females might possibly lay eggs.

Genoa NFH staff met our South Dakota University partners, Dan and Tristin Soluk, at Lockport Prairie, just outside of Chicago, and observed their efforts to locate foraging HED and catch them in nets. Locating the HED proved to be trickier than originally thought as one must be able to identify a dragonfly, mostly while in flight, by either color or body shape. If identification by color is possible, as it perches on plants or flies close enough to catch a glimpse, confirmation of the target species is immediate.

Weather also plays a big role in the ease at which the dragonflies are located. Wind speed, temperature and time of day play a big role in the

likelihood of how many HEDs will be available. A low wind speed, mild temperature and mornings would be considered 'ideal' for HED foraging. Although the weather was beautiful on the day, the wind proved to be a little too strong as the HED activity level was low. As

luck would have it, only one HED female was captured. No eggs were collected as she appeared to have recently emerged. Although no additional dragonflies were caught that morning the trip down was well worth the time as Genoa NFH staff were able to see firsthand both the foraging and spawning habitats.

We were also able to see firsthand the challenges the HED, as well as other native dragonflies, face as they must cross a busy road to get from their foraging site to the spawning site. The dragonflies



Hine's foraging site at Lockport Prairie. Credit: USFWS



generally fly at an equal level of a car windshield resulting in high

Dragonflies must cross this busy road to get to their spawning grounds. Credit USFWS

mortality due to being struck by vehicles traveling at high speeds. As some infrastructure built over their habitat was designed to benefit dragonfly flight paths, there is no guarantee they will adjust to it. As with any recovery program, eventually cooperation with development and habitat conservation will come into play. Stay tuned for more updates on the growth and development of Genoa's HED rearing program and recovery efforts!



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fisheries, Midwest Region

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Ashland Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Diverse Partnership Continues to Improve Stream Habitat in the Lake Superior Basin

BY TED KOEHLER, ASHLAND FWCO



Barriers to fish passage on Menge Creek near Keweenaw Bay in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Credit: Superior Watershed Partnership

isolation, habitat loss or degradation, conflicting public interests and inadequate conservation planning or action. The initial group of partners agreed that action at Menge Creek Road would address and overcome all of these obstacles at this particular location.

Menge Creek located in the State of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is a high quality cold water trout stream that flows north into Lake Superior's Keweenaw Bay. It is an important resource for the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) and a priority for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division due to its high quality waters and valuable coastal estuary. The stream is home to native brook trout, naturalized trout species and important forage species which have recreational, economic and Tribal trust value.

A perched culvert and an undersized culvert at the crossing of Menge Road blocked passage of brook trout and other native fish. The two culverts were both undersized, causing overtopping of the road and sedimentation to the stream during high flows. Those problems were brought to the attention of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Passage Program by KBIC and the Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP). These and other partners working in the Lake Superior basin have identified obstacles to restoration of native brook trout including habitat fragmentation, population



New bridge that replaced culvert barriers and restored fish passage for brook trout and other fish on Menge Creek near Keweenaw Bay in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Credit: Superior Watershed Partnership

Over the course of five years a diverse partnership was formed and the site was restored. The undersized and perched culverts were replaced with a clear span bridge and this on-the-ground action has made available over eight miles of stream habitat for brook trout and other native fish. The restoration actions will also prevent overtopping of the road and sedimentation to the stream during high flows. Partners included the SWP, KBIC, Baraga County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Project evaluations are in the process of being completed by SWP and KBIC. These will include stream hydrology, habitat composition, macroinvertebrate community health, and fish community assessment. Actions taken also implement key planning effort recommendations such as the Lake Superior Lake-wide Management Plan, and Fish Community Objectives for Lake Superior. Overall, the project is an excellent example of working together with a diverse group to make great things happen on-the-ground and in-the-water to benefit our fragile natural resources.



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Fish Tails

Articles submitted by field staff that do not appear as a feature within Fish Lines. These articles provide examples of the diverse work that is performed on behalf of aquatic resources.

Genoa NFH Interns Attend Regional Student Workshop

BY LIZ HACKNER, GENOA NFH

Laura Chappell and I were afforded the opportunity to attend the Midwest Region's Annual Summer Intern workshop in Bloomington, Minnesota at the end of July. We really thank the hatchery for supporting our attendance as we think that they just can't do without us! While in Bloomington we had the amazing opportunity to meet other interns from all over the Region. At the workshop Laura and I had the pleasure of learning all the Service has to offer and all of the important and exciting work being accomplished throughout his region.

We were informed through presentations and conversations about all of these programs, including programs less familiar to us, like Science Applications and Wildlife Sport and Fish Restoration. Laura and I agreed that the highlight of our week was our opportunity to deliver our own presentations to the fisheries staff at the regional office. We were able to talk with the staff and leadership about careers within fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I think the regional office staff really enjoyed hearing our stories about the work we do at Genoa.

During the week we were able to talk with past interns about their experiences and how they got to be where they are today. It was great to see people that were in our shoes not too long ago, reaching their goals and getting where they want to be!

Thanks again to the hatchery and regional office staffs for your support and commitment to training the future fisheries and aquatic conservation professionals within the Service.



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Midwest Region Fisheries Divisions

National Fish Hatcheries

The Region's National Fish Hatcheries (NFH) focus on native species recovery and restoration. Primary species include: lake trout, endangered pallid sturgeon, and endangered, threatened, and native mussels. Other major programs include coaster brook trout and lake sturgeon restoration, fulfilling tribal trust responsibilities for native aquatic species, and cost reimbursed rainbow trout production for recreational fishing. Hatcheries also provide technical assistance to other agencies, provide fish and eggs for research, and develop and maintain brood stocks of various species and strains.



Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCO) conduct assessments of fish populations to guide management decisions, play a key role in targeting and implementing native fish and habitat restoration programs; perform key monitoring and control activities related to aquatic invasive species; survey and evaluate aquatic habitats to identify restoration/rehabilitation opportunities; work with private land owners, states, local governments and watershed organizations to complete aquatic habitat restoration projects under the Service's National Fish Passage Program, National Fish Habitat Partnerships, Partners for Fish and Wildlife and the Great Lakes Coastal Programs; provide coordination and technical assistance toward the management of interjurisdictional fisheries; maintain and operate several key interagency fisheries databases; provide technical expertise to other Service programs addressing contaminants, endangered species, federal project review and hydro-power operation and relicensing; evaluate and manage fisheries on Service lands; and, provide technical support to 38 Native American tribal governments and treaty authorities.

Sea Lamprey Biological Stations

The Fish and Wildlife Service is the United States Agent for sea lamprey control, with two Biological Stations assessing and managing sea lamprey populations throughout the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission administers the Sea Lamprey Management Program, with funding provided through the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of the Interior, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Fish Health Center

The Fish Health Center provides specialized fish health evaluation and diagnostic services to federal, state and tribal hatcheries in the region; conducts extensive monitoring and evaluation of wild fish health; examines and certifies the health of captive hatchery stocks; and, performs a wide range of special services helping to coordinate fishery program offices and partner organizations. The Whitney Genetics Lab serves as a leading edge genetics laboratory and conducts environmental DNA (eDNA) sample processing for early detection of invasive species.

Whitney Genetics Lab

The Whitney Genetics lab provides environmental DNA (eDNA) surveillance for the early detection of invasive Silver and Bighead carp as part of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee's plans to detect, monitor, and respond to the threat of invasive carp in the Great Lakes. The lab also provides analysis for determining the ploidy of wild-caught Black and Grass carp, two more invasive carp species.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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Midwest Region Fisheries Contacts

Regional Office

5600 American Blvd West
Bloomington, MN 55437
Todd Turner todd_turner@fws.gov
612-713-5111

Iron River National Fish Hatchery

10325 Fairview Road
Iron River, WI 54847
Nick Starzl nick_starzl@fws.gov
715-372-8510

Genoa National Fish Hatchery

S 5689 State Road 35
Genoa, WI 54632
Doug Aloisi doug_aloisi@fws.gov
608-689-2605

Jordan River National Fish Hatchery

6623 Turner Road
Elmira, MI 49730
Roger Gordon roger_gordon@fws.gov
231-584-2461

Neosho National Fish Hatchery

520 E Park Street
Neosho, MO 64850
David Hendrix david_hendrix@fws.gov
417-451-0554

Pendills/Sullivan Creek National Fish Hatchery

21990 W. Trout Lane
Brimley, MI 49715
Curt Friez curt_friez@fws.gov
906-437-5231

Midwest Fisheries Center

555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650
Teresa Lewis teresa_lewis@fws.gov
608-783-8420

- **LaCrosse FWCO**
Sam Finney sam_finney@fws.gov
608-783-8434
- **LaCrosse Fish Health Center**
Ken Phillips kenneth_phillips@fws.gov
608-783-8447
- **Whitney Genetics Lab**
Acting Emy Monroe emy_monroe@fws.gov
608-783-8402

Alpena Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

480 W. Fletcher Street
Alpena, MI 49707
Scott Koproski scott_koproski@fws.gov
989-356-5102
Area of Responsibility (MI, OH)

Ashland Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

2800 Lake Shore Drive East
Ashland, WI 54806
Mark Brouder mark_brouder@fws.gov
715-682-6185
Area of Responsibility (MI, MN, WI)

Carterville Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

9053 Route 148, Suite A
Marion, Illinois 62959
Rob Simmonds rob_simmonds@fws.gov
618-997-6869
Area of Responsibility (IL, IN, OH)

Columbia Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

101 Park Deville Drive, Suite A
Columbia, MO 65203
Jason Goeckler jason_goeckler@fws.gov
573-234-2132
Area of Responsibility (IA, MO)

Green Bay Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

2661 Scott Tower Road
New Franken, WI 54229
Mark Holey mark_holey@fws.gov
920-866-1717
Area of Responsibility (IL, IN, MI, WI)

Ludington Biological Station

229 S. Jebavy Drive
Ludington, MI 49431
Scott Grunder scott_grunder@fws.gov
231-845-6205

Marquette Biological Station

3090 Wright Street
Marquette, MI 49855
Kasia Mullett katherine_mullett@fws.gov
906-226-6571