



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Midwest Region

Fisheries Program

Fish Lines

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BUZZZZZ!

Hine's Emerald Dragonfly
Arrive!

Students Help to
Welcome Pollinators

Adult Pallid Sturgeon
Sampling

2015 Lake Trout
Distribution Season
Completed





fish lines

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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.



Cicadas are all the BUZZZZZ!

BY IAN KENNEDY, CARTERVILLE FWCO



Cicada resting on a sunny leaf. Credit: Ian Kennedy, USFWS

emerges as a mobile, breeding adult. Males will create the loud buzzing noise to attract females, and they only have four to six weeks to breed before they die. The adults have bright orange or red eyes, blackish olive bodies, and copper orange wings and legs.

These insects are impressive in small numbers, but every 13 to 17 years there are colossal hatches that fill the landscape with hundreds of thousands of individuals. This essentially turns the areas that the insects call their breeding grounds into an all-you-can-eat buffet bar. All types of animals feed on these insects during this time. Mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles will go into a buffet-style feeding on these insects while they are present. Once the phenomenon is done the insects die and the animals return to their normal feeding patterns. Despite the noise, these insects are extremely interesting and beneficial to our natural world, so if you hear the "buzz" check them out. And if you are adventurous you might even enjoy a tasty snack!

During late May the staff of Carterville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) started to hear odd insects buzzing. By early June the deafening roar of thousands of cicadas filled the air. The large alien-looking insects are quite peculiar, but very interesting!

Cicadas spend much of their life as nymphs below the ground around various species of trees. They will stay in this stage for several years and survive by feeding on the sap of the tree's root system. Once the cicadas reach maturity they will emerge from the ground to complete an interesting transformation. The nymphs will climb up the base of trees or even to the top branches, where they will shed their exoskeleton. This process leaves 1/2 inch to 1 inch insect "pods" clinging to trees, car tires, telephone poles, houses, and anything else the small insects can climb up to change into their new adult "clothes."

Once the transformation is complete, the cicada



Cicadas courting on a branch. Credit: Ian Kennedy, USFWS



Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Arrive!

BY ANGELA BARAN, GENOA NFH



Dragonfly larvae being weighed before placed in the wetland. Credit: USFWS

that Tuesday to prepare for stocking them out on Wednesday. The first year on station, conditions will mimic those at the other summer sites for the larvae so a more accurate assessment of survival and growth can be determined for Genoa NFH.

The larvae were placed in their cages on Wednesday, with half going into the wetland and half into a pond they will share with the mussels. Over the summer, temperatures, dissolved oxygen and water quality will be monitored weekly, the cages also being checked for debris and troubleshooting any issues. The larvae will also be removed each month to be weighed and measured, keeping an eye on their progress and allowing for course correcting along the way.

On June 2, 2015 staff from University of South Dakota arrived at Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) with the dragonfly larvae. This marks the beginning of the collaborative effort among the Genoa NFH, Chicago Ecological Services Office, Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and University of South Dakota (USD) funded through the Cooperative Recovery Initiative. USD has been working with the dragonfly for several years and has studied their growth, tracked their genetics and has developed the first captive rearing techniques for the species. The techniques developed work well for small groups in a lab setting but there is now the need for larger scale production. Genoa will take the methods and work with USD to adapt them to larger scale production and to tailor them to the site specific variables.

The 147 larvae were first weighed (those big enough to weigh!) and a picture was taken of each to measure their head width so their growth over the summer at the hatchery can be calculated. Last minute adjustments to their cages were also made



Dragonfly larvae cages in the wetland. Credit: USFWS



Iron River National Fish Hatchery: Students Help to Welcome Pollinators

BY CAREY EDWARDS, IRON RIVER NFH

It seems like the buzzword these days is “pollinator” and rightly so. They are an integral part of the world’s life cycle. Efforts to cultivate areas where pollinators can reproduce, feed and grow are in effect across the country. The Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) in northern Wisconsin is also doing its part to provide safe harbor for pollinators.

Coming back for the seventh year to assist with pollinator projects is the Iron River Elementary School 5th grade class. This year’s efforts were put forth in beautifying the main hatchery building entrance with ornamental butterfly gardens and fruiting trees and seeding a freshly tilled area with native grasses and milkweed. Two small raised flower beds were planted with butterfly loving plants like salvia and phlox and ten fruiting trees (crabapple, pear and cherry) were planted to beautify the area as well as provide areas where pollinators can feed and rest.

A neighboring farmer prepared the land in which we wanted the native seeds sown. The grass seed was donated by a member of the Friends of the Iron River Hatchery.

Milkweed seeds were collected in the fall and stored in the refrigerator until ready to cast in the loose soil by the students. Before heading back to school, the students were able to tour the hatchery and cool off after a hot morning in the sun.



The Iron River Elementary School's 5th grade class assisted with beautifying the main hatchery building entrance with ornamental butterfly gardens and fruiting trees.
Credit: USFWS



Fruiting trees provide pollinators with food and shelter.
Credit: USFWS



Dirt, plants, seeds and smiles rounded out the day. Credit: USFWS

With a little bit of elbow grease and a lot of teamwork, a very successful and rewarding project was accomplished. The students were able to learn about gardening, butterflies and native plants as well as gain awareness of fish hatchery processes. Stay tuned to see how well the native plantings grew and for future pollinator projects at the Iron River NFH.



Spring 2015 Adult Pallid Sturgeon Sampling on the Middle Mississippi

BY IAN KENNEDY, CARTERVILLE FWCO



Pallid sturgeon captured on the Middle Mississippi River. Credit: Ian Kennedy, USFWS

The effort continues for the Carterville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) to find pallid sturgeon in the Middle Mississippi. Spring sampling proved difficult this year due to strange weather patterns and low water. Despite poor conditions there was success!

Pallid sturgeon are seldom seen and are very difficult to locate in the Middle Mississippi River. These fish were listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act on September 6, 1990. Since being listed pallid sturgeon have been monitored, but there is still very little known about this sturgeon species. With every fish captured a little more information is discovered about this species which helps biologists aid in their survival and recovery.



Colby Wrasse and Gerry Jackson sampling sturgeon with gill nets on the Missouri River. Credit: USFWS



During the 2015 spring season personnel were able to capture 18 pallid sturgeon/pallid sturgeon hybrids (awaiting genetic analysis). The largest specimen was 36 inches long and the smallest was 21 inches. These catches were the same as the 2014 spring season with 18 pallid sturgeon captured, but the



Fisheries biologist Donovan Henry counting fin rays on pallid sturgeon. Credit: Ian Kennedy, USFWS

Fisheries biologist Peter Johnsen releasing lake sturgeon on Middle Mississippi River.
Credit: Ian Kennedy, USFWS

largest was 35 inches
and the smallest was 24 inches.

In addition to the capture of pallid sturgeon there were three lake sturgeon captured during the 2015 spring sampling, a lower number than the 2014 spring sampling where we captured five lake sturgeon. These large sturgeon were a surprise to the crew, because most of the fish were over three feet long! All together the sampling helped gain more valuable data on these elusive fish and aid in future management decisions to help protect and recover pallid sturgeon in the Middle Mississippi River.



2015 Lake Trout Distribution Season Completed

BY CAREY EDWARDS, IRON RIVER NFH



Cooperation and teamwork: Staff teamed up to address the challenge of high water levels at transfer sites. This included the safe transport and deployment of custom made ramps and the safe operation of trucks onto and off of the ramps to

efficiently discharge fish to the vessel. Credit: USFWS

to keep hatchery stock genetically sound. Decisions are also made as to what strain of lake trout will be raised and where it will be stocked and often times, studies are conducted with multiple strains of lake trout at a given site to determine what type of lake trout survives better. These studies could not be completed without the mass marking program which began in 2010. It is a coordinated effort between all jurisdictions to mark (tag or clip) all trout and salmon stocked in the Great Lakes to evaluate whether a fish caught in an assessment is a native or hatchery fish. Information gathered from tagged fish could impact the type of lake trout and how many are being stocked from each hatchery.



Thumbs Up! Hatchery and boat staff signal they are ready to release and accept fish. Credit: USFWS

Putting aside all the planning and technology that takes place at each hatchery to make and grow a healthy lake trout to stocking size, whether it leaves as a shore stocked fall fingerling or as a yearling or is stocked off of the *M/V Spencer F. Baird* as part of the main distribution season, the planning and collaborative processes that takes place is commendable. Nearly a dozen USFWS, U.S. Coast Guard and DNR offices work together in what is nearly a three month operation to stock fish on reefs in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. The ending result is this: approximately 4.4 million lake trout were stocked and...we are in the process of making it happen all over again next year.

Growing and stocking lake trout is a vastly complicated process that starts years in advance before the fish are even created. It doesn't just happen at the local Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or Fish and Wildlife Office (USFWS); it encompasses a plethora of state, federal, and tribal agencies as well as conservation clubs and other organizations. Managing inter-jurisdictional fisheries can be tricky. A federal court order, called the 2000 Consent Decree, was negotiated between the state of Michigan and five Chippewa and Ottawa tribes to set forth standards in managing the fishery in 1836 Treaty waters of Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron with the USFWS being the United States representative for implementation of the Decree. All of these groups work together to evaluate the fisheries, assess the status of fish stocks, establish harvest limits, stock fish and control parasitic sea lamprey which is all part of restoring lake trout in the Great Lakes.

From a hatchery standpoint, decisions are made years in advance on how many brood fish are needed to meet future goals for egg production and how often gametes are to be collected from the wild



Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery's new tank was looking good!. Credit:USFWS



Sea Lamprey Control Program Continues to Improve Control Approaches

BY JESSICA BARBER, MARQUETTE BIOLOGICAL STATION



Biological Science Technician Sean Soucy monitoring the push-pull study site where alarm cue and larval sea lamprey odor responses are being tested on the Upper Ocqueoc River (Lake Huron). Credit: Erica Adams, Michigan State University

Innovation: a new idea, device, or method. When used in a management setting, innovation is a process that brings together various novel ideas in a way that will improve upon the current way of 'doing business'. The primary method used in controlling sea lamprey populations in the Great Lakes is the application of TFM, a chlorinated nitro-phenol pesticide which is selectively toxic to larval lampreys and otherwise benign when applied at the appropriate dosage. However, the Sea Lamprey Control Program recognizes the need to remain innovative in its approaches to controlling sea lampreys to stay ahead of the game and diversify the toolbox. Several innovative research projects are underway this field season that are poised to make the Program more effective at controlling sea lampreys in the future.

Understanding how pheromones and alarm cues influence sea lamprey migration behavior is critical to increasing the efficiency of traps and barriers. Pheromones could be used to *pull* sea lampreys to locations that can either be trapped or treated with lampricide more effectively. Alarm cues could be used to *push* sea lampreys away from locations that can't be trapped or treated with

lampricide effectively. These two novel approaches could be used in concert to manipulate migration behaviors in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the Program.



Biological Science Technicians Matt Bach and Bruce Eldridge monitoring eel ladder style traps at the Cheboygan River (Lake Huron) trap site. Credit: Savannah Bell, Biological Science Technician, USFWS

Improving trapping technology is another area of the Program where efforts are being focused. Sea lamprey traps can be very effective at capturing sea lampreys under certain conditions. However, where one catches sea lampreys one is almost certain to capture non-target species. Eel ladders have the potential to increase trap retention of sea lampreys and decrease the time it takes to sort non-target species and release them in good condition. Eel ladders are upstream fish passage devices that use wetted ramps outfitted with vertical pegs designed to take advantage of the anguilliform swimming motion of sea lampreys. Sea lampreys will ascend the wetted ramp dropping into a retention basin, leaving non-targets to swim freely at the base of the eel ladder.

Another method to improve trap efficiency is to use pulsed direct current as a non-physical lead to guide sea lamprey into traps. At present, trapping is only effective at physical barriers to sea lamprey migration, where individuals will repeatedly encounter traps as they search for a way to migrate upstream. Laboratory studies using a portable, low-voltage DC fish guidance system



Biological Science Technician Kevin Letson monitoring the Chocoley River (Lake Superior) study site where a low-voltage DC fish

(NEMO) were successful at directing sea lampreys into traps. The NEMO leads are designed to be portable, easily deployed, and capable of handling high flow events and debris load. Deployment of the NEMO into a medium sized river will allow the Program to evaluate its use in increasing trap efficiency in the absence of a physical barrier.

guidance system (NEMO) is being used to lead sea lampreys into traps. Credit: Jason Pynnonen, Biological Science Technician, USFWS

As you can see, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is collaborating with researchers throughout the Great Lakes basin to develop innovative technologies that will assist in the fight against sea lampreys. A pest management program can only truly be effective if it is multi-faceted and eager to seek innovative solutions to an ever changing environment.



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.

What's SUPSY?

BY NATHAN ECKERT, GENOA NFH

SUPSY isn't a slang term or text lingo. It's an acronym standing for "suspended upwelling system." The SUPSY is a chamber made from small buckets which is suspended in a pond and used for the culture of freshwater mussels.

The SUPSY was developed by mussel culture biologists with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Air from a compressor is bubbled into the chamber creating a flow of water through the chamber which brings the freshwater mussels oxygen and food. Biologists in Alabama have been quite successful raising freshwater mussels up to a size large enough to tag and release using this method.

This summer Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) in Wisconsin is partnering with the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium to test the SUPSY method in the Dubuque, Iowa Ice Harbor just off the Mississippi River. Our hope is that this technique will lead to increased mussel growth and improved production capacity over culture methods currently being used at the hatchery. The initial test includes eight SUPSY buckets, each stocked with 250 yearling mussels. The mussels were measured and placed on May 21st. The plan is to take measurements and pictures on a monthly basis to observe mussel growth and to check for mortality.

Currently Genoa NFH has more yearling mussels on hand than are feasible to culture on-station. This partnership will allow us to spread out the load. In addition to helping the hatchery, staff at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium plan to incorporate local students into the SUPSY cleaning and data collection. This project will benefit both the hatchery and the museum all while providing an opportunity for some students to participate in freshwater mussel conservation.

Volunteers Join the Quest for the Perfect Broodstock

BY AMBER MASTERS, COLUMBIA FWCO

It was all hands on deck for the fisheries crews at the Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) during their annual broodstock efforts. For two weeks in early spring, the Pallid Sturgeon crew embarked on a challenging quest to find the biggest and most beautiful wild Pallid Sturgeon in the lower Missouri River- and the small crew needed a few extra crewmates.

The Neosho National Fish Hatchery and Blind Pony State Fish Hatchery raise endangered Pallid Sturgeon to be stocked into the lower Missouri River. In order to be successful, the hatchery needs broodstock- or parent fish- for the thousands of Pallid Sturgeon reared there annually. A Pallid Sturgeon must meet a number of criteria before being used as broodstock. He or she must be wild (not hatchery-reared), healthy, reproductively viable, genetically pure (not a hybrid), and cannot have been used as broodstock previously. This is to avoid genetic bottlenecks and interspecies hybridizations that can cripple or destroy wild populations. Every year, the Columbia FWCO intensively searches the Missouri River, hoping to capture fish that fit the high standards to qualify as broodstock.

Broodstock season means long, difficult days for everyone on the Pallid crew. Before the season began, crew members were already working to recruit helping hands. Posters designed, calls made, emails disseminated- within a few days the schedule filled up with eager volunteers. Up to four people per day were able to join a broodstock crew for trot-lining on the Missouri River. Many were regular fishermen, who have spent years fishing on the Missouri River; others were first-timers who got their first boating adventure with the Columbia FWCO. Neither the old hats nor the newbies had ever before seen the rare and elusive Pallid Sturgeon- all were thrilled at the chance.

The Pallid crew was able to set over 4,600 hooks and capture over 30 Pallid Sturgeon this year, thanks to the help of 20 ambitious volunteers who put in a total of 148 hours of work for the Columbia FWCO. The crews were lucky, each of the volunteers was able to see and handle at least one Pallid Sturgeon as well as other rare species such as Lake Sturgeon. In addition, volunteers helped with plenty of Shovelnose Sturgeon, large Blue Catfish, Freshwater Drum and the occasional Chestnut Lamprey. The majority of the Pallid Sturgeon were hatchery raised and none of them were up to the strict broodstock

standards; however, it is crucial that the success of released hatchery raised Pallid Sturgeon is monitored and it was an excellent opportunity to educate the public on the importance of programs like the Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment and Monitoring Program and the Columbia FWCO.

Even though the weather was dismally cold, drearily rainy and bitterly windy, the volunteers were radiating excitement and energy throughout the day. The feeling was contagious to even the curmudgeonliest of the Pallid crew, and everyone aboard the boats had a great time. The work was exhausting to the Columbia FWCO crew, but exhilarating to the volunteers. For those whose daily grind is to pull in heavy nets, handle hundreds of fish and work through rain, snow, heat and sun- the joy of the volunteers was a refreshing reminder of how fun working on the river can be. The volunteers brought relief from long hours and hard work, insightful and thoughtful questions, opportunities to educate and share important information about Missouri River conservation issues and a cheery attitude to the cause for two weeks. The Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office is grateful for all their hard work!



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.



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