

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Midwest Region

Fisheries Program

fish lines

**Biology Students Learn
Tools of the Trade**

**Tagging Technology for
Brook Trout**

**Expanding Asian Carp
Telemetry**

**Invasive Species
Predictions**

**Fish Passage Project
Celebration**





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

Conserving America's Fisheries

Great Lakes Fisheries Management High School Biology Students Learn Tools of the Trade

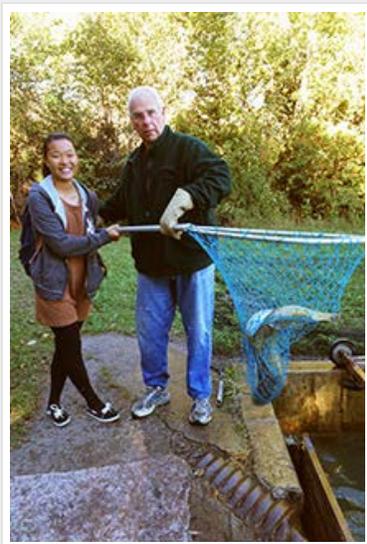
BY TIM SMIGIELSKI, REGIONAL OFFICE-FISHERIES

In support of their new Salmon in the Classroom project 80 students and their teachers from Mancelona High School in Antrim County, Michigan took to the field. The students visited the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Charlevoix Great Lakes Research Station in October where part of the presentation was getting slimed by salmon at a nearby salmon harvest weir.

Mancelona Public Schools is a partner and active participant in nearby Jordan River National Fish Hatchery programs and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) events. The MDNR Charlevoix research station has worked together with Jordan River NFH to share temporary student workers and provide diverse work experiences and affordable housing to students. So it was a natural fit for our Fisheries program Conservation Education Coordinator, Tim Smigielski to make the connection between Mancelona's Biology teacher Jenny Angell and Charlevoix Research Station manager Dave Clapp and Maintenance supervisor Jeff Stevens. This group coordinated and scheduled the day afield for the biology classes in order to augment the new Salmon in the Classroom project, where Mrs. Angell's' students will be raising salmon from eggs provided by MDNR Platte River State Fish Hatchery. This project will commence in November of this year.



These students take a little closer look at the anatomy of a salmon during one of the presentations at the MDNR Charlevoix Research Station. Credit: Tim Smigielski, USFWS



Mancelona Biology student Tiffany Lo helps Jeff Stevens with MDNR hoist salmon from the holding pen during a visit to the Medusa Creek harvest weir on Little Traverse Bay, Lake Michigan. Credit: Jenny Angell, Mancelona High School

Presentations were delivered in a rotating format and included experiences with, Great Lakes Fisheries Sampling (Patrick Hanchin, MDNR Charlevoix) where students became familiar with the gear biologists use to collect fish and fisheries data such as gill nets, trawls, trapnets and an even an electrofishing boat. Then it was on to the Great Lakes Mass Marking program with (Nick Arend and Barrett Warmbein, Seasonal Workers-USFWS Headhunters) where students observed the lab work involved in removal of Coded Wire Tags from salmon heads. Lessons on salmon anatomy and diet (stomach content) analysis rounded out the presentation. Now it was up the stairs to Fish Aging with (Dave Clapp MDNR Charlevoix), at this station students were introduced to an image analysis computer system. Displayed on the screen, were examples of fish scales, otoliths (ear bones), and spines (fin bones) and maxillaries (jaw bones) all structures that can be used in ageing fish. The young biologists learned the importance of fish age determination in assessing the growth and survival of fishes and in management of our fisheries.



MDNR research biologist Patrick Hanchin explains how a minnow trap works. Credit: Tim Smigielski, USFWS

All of this culminated in a trip to the Medusa Creek salmon harvest weir led by (Jeff Stevens and John Clevenger, MDNR

Charlevoix) just down the road from the research station on Lake Michigan's Little Traverse Bay. The aspiring young biologists were schooled on salmon stocking and life history with most seeing and some handling live chinook salmon that were corralled in the raceway. And...it got a little messy!

Biology teacher Jenny Angell had this to say about the trip, "I was just reading the kids' assignment I had them do last week right after the field trip. Students were split pretty evenly between liking the aging station the best, liking the weir (and getting slimed) and being fascinated by the CWT removal. My students were very appreciative of your staff and the time you all took with them. Thank you all so very much for this awesome experience!"

And so...this is why we do it, continue to make the time, continue to coordinate the events and continue to pass on the knowledge and passion for our natural resources, fisheries conservation and all that nature has to offer. If we only reach one of those eighty students and they become a concerned citizen or choose a career in this field...then it is all worth it. Special thanks to the outstanding young people who were willing to share their knowledge and unique experiences, Annalise Povoio, Samantha Morsches and Mike Diefenbach, all seasonal workers with MDNR Charlevoix Research Station.

Last updated: November 12, 2015

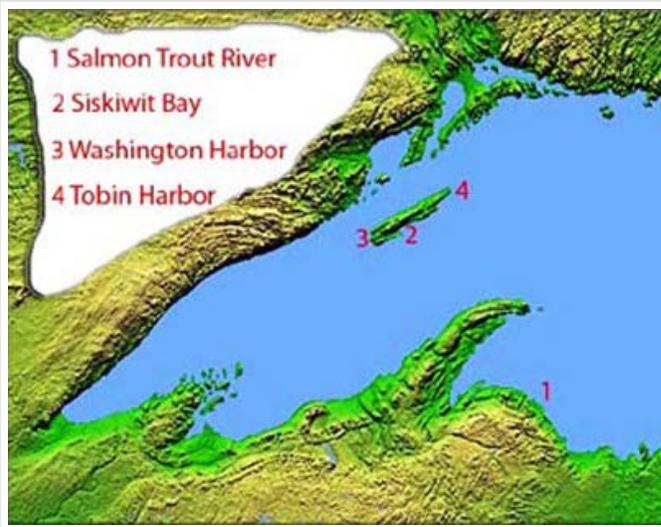


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fisheries, Midwest Region

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Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory First to Use Automated Tagging Technology for Brook Trout

BY ALLEN LANE, GREEN BAY FWCO



Remaining Brook Trout population in U.S. waters of Lake Superior. Credit: USFWS

National Park's Tobin Harbor for use in rehabilitating other populations. Recent evidence suggests that there are no genetic differences associated with these migratory fish and stream resident forms. Out-migration of brook trout to Lake Superior is thought to be induced by high stream density rather than any genetic coding.

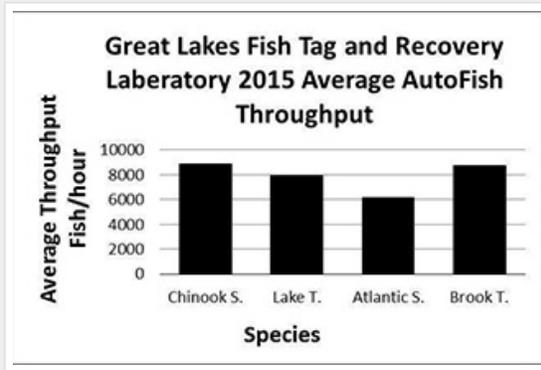
Since 2010, the automated tagging system has been used by the GLFTRL to mark and tag hatchery reared chinook salmon, lake trout, and atlantic salmon stocked into the Great Lakes. This system rapidly marks and tags fish by removing the adipose fin, small fleshy fin between dorsal and caudal fin, and inserting a 1.1mm stainless steel coded-wire tag that is laser etched with a unique six digit code.

The system was designed for Pacific salmon and many modifications were necessary to accommodate the morphological and behavioral differences between the Pacific salmon and lake trout. Brook trout are morphologically similar to Lake trout, both members of the Char family; therefore modification to the tagging system used for lake trout was used successfully on brook trout, with an average throughput of 8,700 fish per hour.

These results suggest coded-wire tags could be successfully used in future studies of the brook trout population. The GFTRL operates four portable automated tagging systems to provide tagging and marking services to state and federal hatcheries throughout the Great Lakes basin. The program is currently funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory (GLFTRL), based at the Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, marked and tagged brook trout in early October at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH). This was the first time that brook trout have been tagged and clipped with the automated system. Previously, brook trout have been marked by fin clips or an oxytetracycline mark on their bones so stocked fish could be distinguished from wild fish and to help estimate age. By using coded-wire tags, additional information such as stocking location and fish movements can be attained, and, the tags will last longer than fin clips that may regenerate over time.

Some brook trout in Lake Superior leave their resident streams to feed in the open waters of the lake and at maturity make spawning runs up Lake Superior tributaries. Due to overfishing and habitat loss the populations of brook trout were extirpated from many streams. Iron River NFH raises brook trout from brood stock collected at Isle Royale



Average throughput for the four salmonid species currently marked and tagged by the AutoFish system. Credit: Allen Lane, USFWS

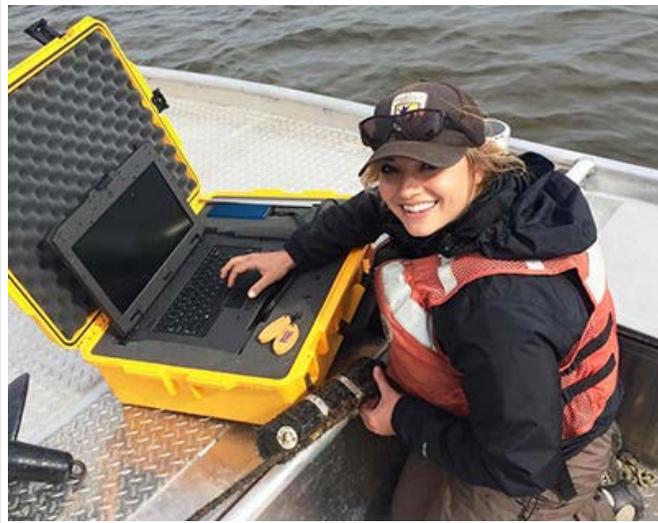


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La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Expanding Asian Carp Telemetry on Mississippi River

BY KYLE MOSEL, LA CROSSE FWCO



Bailey Ketelsen offloads an acoustic receiver which revealed acoustically tagged Asian carp in Pool 16. Credit: USFWS

During October, Tyler Harris, Katie Lieder, and Kyle Mosel traveled to Muscatine, Iowa to see if we could acoustically tag Asian carp on Pool 16 in the Mississippi River. Numerous efforts have been made to capture Asian carp above Lock & Dam 16 on several pools during 2015 but with no success. However, in recent weeks we located several tagged bighead and hybrid Asian carp in Pool 16 with the manual tracking gear and also on our stationary acoustic receivers. The next week we brought our surgery gear and a boat full of gill nets to see if we could capture Asian carp where three other fish have been located. After battling the cold and strong winds, six Asian carp were collected on Pool 16 which is the first time a state or federal agency has captured and reported Asian carp according to the Nonindigenous Aquatic Species website hosted by U.S. Geological Survey. Even though we would not like to see these fish advance up the Mississippi River, being able to follow these fish within the river will allow us to identify sites for future monitoring or control efforts.

In total four silver carp and one hybrid Asian carp ranging in size from 15 to 25 pounds were implanted with Vemco transmitters and released in Pool 16. These "Judas" fish will be closely followed for the next seven years to see if they can help identify sites on Pool 16 to capture, monitor, and possibly control the spread of Asian carp in the future. So far we have learned a lot from the tagged fish on Pools 17, 18, and 19, so hopefully these new fish from Pool 16 can show us where they are residing throughout the year.



A biologist holds the first acoustically tagged and released silver carp on Pool 16. Credit: USFWS



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Invasive Species Predictions Using Risk Assessments

BY KJETIL HENDERSON, CARTERVILLE FWCO

Preventing future invasive species introductions is the most efficient way to limit their damage. But where do you start? There is an estimated 8.7 million species worldwide, including 400,000 plants, and 80,000 vertebrates. Very few species survive and reproduce outside their native range, and even less actually cause ecological or economic damage. A few organisms cause most of the damage among the estimated 6,500 invasive species in the United States. These choice organisms cause major problems by damaging crops, livestock, timber, fisheries, and other resources.

Problem species, once established, are difficult or impossible to eradicate. Preventing the introduction of various species requires regulating introduction pathways before they enter the United States. Since most species are spread by humans, these introductions are controllable. One pathway for invasive species to enter the country is via trade, either purposefully or as a contaminant. Specifically, certain commodities including ornamental plants, aquarium species, and grain shipments have introduced problem species into the United States. Predetermining which organisms cause ecological and economic damage is valuable to invasive species prevention, and a focus of natural resource agencies in some developed countries.



Nutria are native to South America. This invasive species has caused substantial damage in portions of the United States. Credit: USFWS flickr accessed (2005).



Common Caiman are native to Central and South America. This species was introduced to the United States in part through the pet trade industry. Credit: Wikipedia Commons (2015).

Over the last few years, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) personnel have been working on a process to determine the potential invasiveness of individual species. Risk Assessments are educated predictions of invasiveness based on an organism's documented history of invasion, and climate matching comparing the United States to the established range of the researched organism. In the last few months, personnel at the Carterville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) have evaluated 77 different species using recently established Risk Assessment procedures. Evaluated species include: Russian olive, salt cedar, common caiman, American bullfrog, nutria, rusty crayfish, and reed canary grass. These documents are used by state and federal agencies, and can be incorporated in decision making for Lacey Act regulations. Today the Lacey Act regulates the import of any species protected by international or domestic law and prevents the spread of invasive, or non-native, species. Prevention is the most effective way to stop invasive species, and USFWS personnel are working to proactively address this problem.



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

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Frankenmuth, Michigan Fish Passage Project Celebration

BY JUSTIN CHIOTTI, ALPENA FWCO – WATERFORD, MICHIGAN SUB - STATION



The rock ramp constructed in the Cass River in Frankenmuth, MI now provides fish with 73 miles of previously inaccessible habitat. Credit: USFWS

apart. The entire rock ramp is approximately 300 feet in length.

The ribbon cutting event was well attended by the media, local dignitaries, governmental representatives, and members of the community. During the ceremony speakers highlighted not only the ecological importance of reconnecting the river, but how important this project is to the City of Frankenmuth and Saginaw River watershed. The Service's National Fish Passage Program Coordinator, Susan Wells, was on hand to deliver a speech on behalf of the Service. Prior to becoming the National Fish Passage Program Coordinator, Susan served as the first Fish Passage Coordinator for Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO). During her time in Alpena she was involved in the initial conversations regarding the Frankenmuth Dam removal project so it was nice to have her present to celebrate this momentous occasion.

Since 2010, fish biologists from the Alpena FWCO have been collecting fisheries data above and below the Frankenmuth Dam in order to evaluate the fish community. In the upcoming years pre and post assessment data will be used to monitor changes in the fish community and evaluate the success of the rock ramp to allow fish passage. The Saginaw River watershed and Saginaw Bay contain some of the best walleye fishing in the world. Reconnecting the Cass River will provide valuable spawning habitat for not only walleye, but smallmouth bass, and many other native fish species as well.

The Frankenmuth fish passage project was a collaborative project with many different funding agencies, for more information and live webcam please visit: <http://www.frankenmuthcity.com/information/damproject>

On October 27th, a ribbon cutting event was held along the banks of the Cass River in Frankenmuth, Michigan showcasing the most recent fish passage project in the Saginaw River watershed. For over ten years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) along with many partners have been eagerly awaiting the day when the Cass River is reconnected to 73 miles of high quality fish spawning habitat upstream of the Frankenmuth Dam.

The Frankenmuth Dam was constructed prior to the Civil War and has been a part of Frankenmuth's history for over 160 years. The dam was originally built as a mill and the impounded water upstream of the dam serves as a tourist attraction where the "Bavarian Belle Riverboat" and "Frankenmuth Fun Ships" operate during the summer. In order to maintain the impoundment created by the dam, but still allow for fish passage, it was decided that a rock ramp structure be constructed to meet both economic and ecological goals. The rock ramp imitates natural rapids and consists of fourteen wedge shaped weirs spaced about twenty feet



National Fish Passage Program Coordinator Susan Wells delivers a speech at the Frankenmuth rock ramp ribbon cutting ceremony. Credit: USFWS



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Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office It's What We Do!

BY COLUMBIA FWCO

Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO), located in Columbia, Missouri, was established in 1991. The office is conveniently located just a few miles from the Missouri River, home of the federally endangered Pallid Sturgeon, a species that Columbia FWCO and our partners are working diligently to recover. However, Columbia FWCO's work extends well beyond the muddy banks of the Missouri River and includes a diverse array of fisheries work performed across the Midwest Region.

Pallid Sturgeon Monitoring and Recovery

Since 1997, Columbia FWCO has been part of a basin-wide monitoring effort and is responsible for assessing the lower 250-miles of Missouri River for use by Pallid



The Missouri River near the Columbia FWCO. Credit: USFWS, Columbia FWCO

Sturgeon. This species of sturgeon is a relic from the dinosaur age; however, despite surviving millennia in the Missouri River the population succumbed to overfishing and habitat alteration. Pallid Sturgeon were listed as federally endangered in 1990. Throughout the duration of the long-term monitoring project, Columbia FWCO has led efforts to improve sampling methods and efficiency including developing new trawling techniques uniquely adapted for the challenges of sampling the Missouri River. Recovery efforts also include assisting our partners at Neosho National Fish Hatchery and Blind Pony State Fish Hatchery with propagation of the species. Columbia FWCO participates in broodstock collection, where wild Pallid Sturgeon are captured from the Missouri River and transported to hatcheries for spawning. Through this propagation program, nearly 159,000 young Pallid Sturgeon have been stocked into the lower Missouri River.

Habitat Assessment and Monitoring Project

Columbia FWCO is working with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to evaluate the efficacy of existing shallow water habitats (natural and human made) to support early life history stages of the endangered Pallid Sturgeon in the lower Missouri River (LMOR) as part of the Habitat Assessment and Monitoring Program (HAMP). In addition to sampling for Pallid Sturgeon, crews are gaining a better understanding of how all fish species in the LMOR use of available shallow water habitat throughout the year. Shallow water habitats are hypothesized to be critical to the survival of larval and juvenile native fishes by providing nursery areas for them to escape the fast moving water and to feed and grow. The information collected from this project will facilitate adaptive decision making for future habitat construction action by the USACE.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Columbia FWCO is part of the massive effort underway to prevent invasive carp from spreading into the Great Lakes. The primary focus for the office is to develop new gears to monitor and capture Bighead and Silver carps, as well as other aquatic invasive species. Columbia FWCO continues to develop and improve the electrified and non-electrified butterfly trawl (paupier), dozer trawl and the lampara purse seine that target fast swimming adult carp. Our gear development efforts also include nets and techniques for capturing the young-of-year and juvenile carps. Surface (mamou and scalene) trawls have shown great success for sampling these elusive early life history stages of Bighead and Silver carps. As part of the invasive carp monitoring in the Illinois River and Chicago Area Waterway System, a project is planned to study the early life history stages and habitat use of these invasive species. Columbia FWCO is also working with state and federal partners to design and implement novel detection gears and sampling methods to monitor the invasive Round Goby and Northern Snakehead, two species that are poised to invade Missouri.

Fish Habitat Program

National efforts continue in an attempt to mitigate impacts from past anthropogenic activities and prevent further degradation of aquatic habitats. The Columbia FWCO administers funds for projects supported through the National Fish Passage Program and the National Fish Habitat Action Partnership. These programs fund projects that remove or replace structures and barriers which impede natural passage of aquatic organisms and assist landowners in adopting best management practices that add value to their property while restoring aquatic habitat. Through these programs, Columbia FWCO works closely with state,

county and private partners in Missouri and Iowa providing technical and financial assistance. The focal area for our passage projects has been the historic range of federally threatened Niangua Darter, although projects have also been funded in Iowa, in the range of the federally endangered Topeka Shiner and in Meramec River tributaries. The Meramec River Basin is recognized at the state and national level for its vast diversity of organisms, both terrestrial and aquatic, and unique habitats making it a conservation priority for many organizations and agencies including the Columbia FWCO and its partners. Much of our habitat work has been focused in this basin and being that these resources are privately owned, lends perfectly to the mission of this partnership.

Federal Lands

Columbia FWCO has long been committed to servicing the fisheries needs of Federal Lands including the Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges and Department of Defense lands. Columbia FWCO has established an excellent working relationship with Mark Twain National Forest to assess fish and mussel populations in priority watersheds of Missouri. We also work with the Army Corps of Engineers to assess habitat creation projects on the Missouri River. Perhaps the most rewarding aspects of our work comes through numerous outreach events designed to reach out to the public and children to introduce them to conservation and appreciate the fish we work so hard to protect.

Ecological Services Support

Columbia FWCO is co-located with the Columbia Ecological Services Missouri Field Office and continues to assist with fish and mussel surveys associated with contaminated watersheds and as part of the hydropower dam relicensing. Combining our resources and collective expertise helps both offices collectively reach our goals more efficiently and effectively.

Last updated: November 12, 2015



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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.

Another Group of Students Learns Mussel Propagation for Restoration

BY NATHAN ECKERT, GENOA NFH

The second Freshwater Mussel Propagation for Restoration Course was held in September at the Bozeman Fish Technology Center in Bozeman, Montana. The course is offered by the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, but can be held at remote locations. Twenty-four students from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, multiple state conservation agencies and private industry attended the course to learn freshwater mussel propagation and culture from Service mussel propagation biologists. The course was designed to complement the Conservation Biology of Freshwater Mussels introductory course offered at NCTC. The course aimed to take students through all phases of freshwater mussel propagation and culture; starting with answering the question, "why propagate freshwater mussels?" Lectures then focused specifically on animal collection, propagation, culture, release and ultimately monitoring. Lab activities centered on mussel identification, host fish inoculation, juvenile mussel recovery and mussel culture systems. One field trip was held at a nearby river where students were able to practice collecting freshwater mussels and determine whether the individuals were gravid or not. Techniques for population monitoring were demonstrated during the field trip as well. Back in class, the students were given a scenario with target species and goals to plan restoration activities. The student groups presented their plans to accomplish restoration goals on the final day of the course and received feedback from the instructors. Course instructors Matthew Patterson, Nathan Eckert, Tony Brady, Rachel Mair and Jess Jones felt the course went well. The students were enthusiastic and passionate about the material. If you are interested in attending the next offering of Freshwater Mussel Propagation for Restoration watch the NCTC course catalogue, the plan is for the course to be held at NCTC in September of 2016.

Fish, Food and Fun

BY CAREY EDWARDS, IRON RIVER NFH

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) hosted its 13th annual open house this fall. The main focus of the event is to provide a safe and fun environment where children (and adults) can learn about fish, fisheries management, the sport of fishing and the great outdoors. In today's technological society, many children have not been exposed to fishing, hunting or even hiking in the woods. The future of our resource lies in the hands of these same children so it is imperative to reach and teach at an early age. Lucky for us, we have some great partners that feel the same way. So let the fun begin...

This year's open house landed on another bluebird day that brought in over 120 guests. The experience had a carnival feel to it in which young and young at heart could participate in events throughout the hatchery. The Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) donated materials for event goers to tie their own fly and members showed off their expertise with hands-on fly casting demonstrations. Visitors were able to fish for the wily lawn bass and a prize (donated by the Friends of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery) was given to each child successfully landing their catch. Hatchery tours, Gyotaku (Japanese fish printing), minnow races and a youth archery range were also available for guests to try their hand at. The Brule River Sportsman's Club rounded out the day with a free cook out lunch for hungry visitors.

Partnerships are the cornerstone to any successful operation and the Iron River National Fish Hatchery is no exception. Thanks to these collaborations, the hatchery was able to host a fun and positive event and possibly helped shape the future stewards of our great resource. Stay tuned to see what new events are happening at the hatchery this year.



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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