



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Midwest Region

Fisheries Program

Fish Lines

**Coded Wire Tags in
Brook Trout**

**Connecting Children
with Nature**

**Monitors for Invasive
Macroinvertebrates**

**Delivers 2015 Barrier
Program**

**Region Wins 2015
Monarch Challenge**





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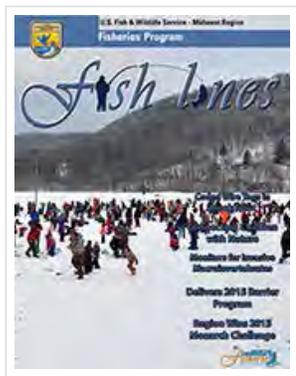
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Coded Wire Tags in Brook Trout



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Delivers 2015 Barrier Program



Region Wins 2015 Monarch Challenge

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: March 10, 2016



Assessing Long Term Loss of Coded Wire Tags in Brook Trout

BY ALLEN LANE, GREEN BAY FWCO



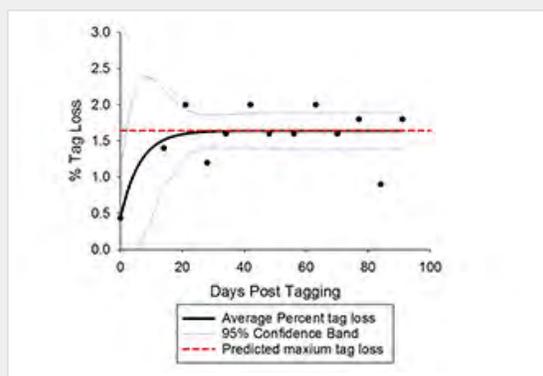
Brook trout with an adipose fin clip and coded wire tag ready to be returned to the raceway.
Credit: Allen Lane, USFWS

In October of 2015, the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory coded wire tagged and adipose fin clipped a group of 100,000 brook trout at Iron River National Fish Hatchery. An automated tagging and marking system was used for the project and this was the first time that brook trout had been tagged and clipped using the automated tagging system. (For specific information about the tagging project, refer to the 2015 "Fishlines" article "[Tagging Technology used for Brook Trout](#)".

The automated system tags and marks the fish at the hatcheries when they are 3- to 5-inches long, injecting the 1.1 millimeter stainless steel coded wire tag into their snout and simultaneously clipping the adipose fin. The tag bears a unique batch code that identifies each group of hatchery fish and the adipose fin clip identifies the fish as hatchery-reared and possessing a tag. When recovered from the fishery, the tag information identifies the hatchery of origin, genetic strain, and stocking date and location for each fish, and, allows fisheries personnel to determine the growth and survival of the fish, observe movement within and among the lakes, and evaluates the success of various rearing and stocking practices.

Understanding long-term tag loss is important for the accurate assessment of the tag recovery data. The team at the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory conducted similar study on lake trout from 2012 to 2013 that measured tag loss for 250 days after tagging. The lake trout study showed that tag loss stabilized at around 150 days post tagging and about 4 percent of the fish lost their tags. Preliminary results for the brook trout show tag loss stabilized at about 30 days post tagging, with less than two percent losing their tags. These results are noteworthy because, although brook trout are taxonomically more closely related to lake trout, the observed tag loss rates and tag loss stabilization data align more with those published for Pacific salmon than those measured for lake trout.

The Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory mass marking program, headquartered at the Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO), New Franken, Wisconsin, has been tagging and marking fish using the automated tagging systems since 2010. The automated system was developed for use with Pacific salmon and the team at the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory has pioneered its use with lake trout, Atlantic salmon, and now brook trout. The Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory mass marking program is designed to provide fisheries scientists and managers with useful information to better understand and manage the complex Great Lakes fisheries. Research projects such as this are important steps in the development and expansion of this valuable program.



Brook trout coded wire tag loss stabilized at about 30 days post tagging. Credit: Allen Lane, USFWS



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Connecting Children with Nature

BY OREY ECKES, GENOA NFH

Last month students from Southern Bluffs Elementary, Summit Environmental and Lincoln Middle Schools, La Crosse, Wisconsin, spent the day trading in text books for hands-on learning at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Wisconsin.

The hatchery partners with Southern Bluffs, Lincoln and Summit schools to support their mission of providing students with a solid educational foundation in the core academic areas, with an environmental focus integrated throughout the curriculum. This directly correlates to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Connecting People with Nature priority.

Genoa NFH collaborates directly with teachers to match activities at the hatchery with corresponding class work. Students visit the hatchery in fall, winter and spring each year as part of the outdoor classroom and Hatchery staff members also visit the classroom for in class lessons. In class lessons consist of native fish identification, fish anatomy, native freshwater mussels, monarch restoration and habitat enhancement.



Students make and identify different animal tracks. Credit: USFWS



Students learning ethical trapping techniques. Credit: USFWS

and the ecological benefits of prairies to many species of animals. In addition students plant milkweed that was grown over the winter in the classroom.

Students also use quadrats to assess the amount of cover of different species of prairie grasses and possible invasive plants. This data allows the hatchery to assess its restoration practices and take action where needed. These hands-on experiences create memories and instill conservation in the minds of these future stewards of our natural resources.

During the first session of outdoor classroom, students experience hands-on learning activities based on lessons in the classroom. In the fall students tour the hatchery and learn about the importance of aquatic resource management and the role the hatchery plays in sustaining and recovering fish and mussel populations.

In winter students learn about animal tracks, furs, and experience the history and sport of trapping, and the importance of trapping as an effective management tool. Students also grow milkweed in the classroom over the winter months for planting on hatchery grounds in the spring.

During spring session the students tour the hatchery to see how the fish have grown over winter. This allows students to observe different species of fish and life stages from eggs through adults. The students end their day with a lesson on prairie restoration



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Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Monitors for Invasive Macroinvertebrates

BY ANTHONY REITH, GREEN BAY FWCO



A petri dish containing part of a macroinvertebrate sample. Credit: Anthony Rieth, USFWS

preserved in ethanol for further processing in the laboratory.

Sample processing in the laboratory involves multiple steps. The first step involves a process called sugar floating. Specific gravity is the ratio of the density of a substance to the density of water. Water and sugar are combined to create a solution with a specific gravity of 1.13, the same specific gravity as most non-shelled or non-encapsulated macroinvertebrates. By removing the ethanol and then placing a sample in sugar water, a large portion of the macroinvertebrates will become neutrally buoyant and float to the top where they can be scooped up and placed into a vial. Sugar water is drained and replaced with ethanol for the remaining portion of the sample; this portion is placed in petri dishes and viewed under a microscope. Macroinvertebrates are hand-picked with forceps and placed into a vial.

Completed samples may yield several hundred macroinvertebrates including amphipods, chironomids (midges) and ephemeroptera (mayflies). After all 120 collected samples are processed, the next task is the identifying the different macroinvertebrates to monitor for invasive species. By observing macroinvertebrates we hope to be able to detect new aquatic invasive species and be able to prevent their spread. By routinely sampling, we also get a good sense of what macroinvertebrates belong and don't belong in a particular ecosystem.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) Aquatic Invasive Species Program collected a total of 120 macroinvertebrate samples from 13 different locations on Lake Michigan in 2015. Most macroinvertebrate samples were collected through the use of rock bags, although a few were also collected from sediment sampling grabs from the lake bottom.

Rock bags were constructed by wrapping several small one to two inch rocks into a small amount of mesh material. Floats were attached to the rock bags using rope for easy deployment and retrieval. Rock bags were left in the lake for several weeks to allow invertebrates to colonize them. Rock bags were collected, placed in a bucket of water, deconstructed, and thoroughly agitated to dislodge macroinvertebrates from all rock and mesh material. All rocks and mesh material were then removed from the bucket and the remaining water was filtered to collect the macroinvertebrate sample. The resulting sample material was placed in a bottle and



A close-up view of the macroinvertebrates (and a Round Goby - bottom right) from a sorted sample. Credit: Anthony Rieth, USFWS



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Marquette Biological Station

Delivers 2015 Barrier Program: Operation, Maintenance, Consultation, and Planning

BY GREGORY KLINGLER MARQUETTE BIOLOGICAL STATION

The barrier team from the Sea Lamprey Control Program's Marquette Biological Station annually operates and maintains sea lamprey barriers throughout the Great Lakes. There are 46 barriers specifically built to block sea lampreys and 27 other structures that were modified to function as sea lamprey barriers to prevent migration upstream and infest suitable habitat.

In addition to the sea lamprey barriers, the team completed inspection of 371 dams during 2015 that were previously identified to impact the Sea Lamprey Control program if the structure should fail or be removed. Inspection information is used to ensure the barrier continues to block sea lamprey migration and identify repair or rebuild projects.

Dam removals have increased during the last several years and pose a significant threat to the success of the program. The barrier team completed 45 consultations with partner agencies on proposed dam removals or modifications. Sea Lamprey Control Program recognizes the importance of striking a balance between improving connectivity of watershed for the benefit of native species and limiting access of invasive species, such as the sea lamprey, to areas upstream of existing barriers.

Planning for barrier construction on the Grand, Little Manistee and Manistique rivers in Michigan, the Grand River in Ohio, the Cattaraugus River in New York and the Bad River in Wisconsin continued during 2015. Construction on the Grand River sea lamprey barrier is targeted for construction during 2017, while others would likely be constructed during 2018 or beyond.

The Sea Lamprey Control Program continues to work closely with others to control populations of sea lampreys in tributaries of the Great Lakes, to protect the fishery and related economic activities in the basin, an estimated annual benefit of \$7 billion per year to the region. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delivers a program of integrated sea lamprey control in the U.S. waters of the Great Lakes in partnership with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. For more information, contact Greg Klingler at 906-226-1209.



Sea lamprey barrier with trap and sort fish ladder on Trail Creek in Michigan City, Indiana. Credit: USFWS



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Midwest Region Wins 2015 Monarch Challenge Award

BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS- REGIONAL OFFICE

Congratulations to Midwest Region Staff on bringing the 2015 Monarch Challenge Award for Education & Outreach home! With little time to plan for monarchs in the summer, you moved monarch mountains.

The Midwest Region stood out for its participation in monarch and pollinator activities, outreach and work in all eight states - across programs and offices. From engaging youth, to planting butterfly gardens, to bringing decision makers together, the Midwest Region worked hard to engage people with monarchs and won the 2015 Education and Outreach Award by a landslide.

A snapshot of Midwest Region monarch outreach and education in 2015:

Rock Island Ecological Services Field Office in Illinois hosted the first ever Quad Cities Pollinator Conference. This conference was very successful and will be repeated this year.

Service programs collaborated to create the "Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative" to improve habitat conditions for pollinators in Ohio. This effort was led by staff from the Ohio Ecological Services Office, Ohio Private Lands Office and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge.

In Iowa, staff at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Des Moines, Iowa created and led the People for Pollinators Program to enhance stewardship and education on wheels. Staff took a trailer to schools, businesses, and communities to partner with the FWS to plant a pollinator garden.

The social media campaign #ShareYourMonarchs, led by the Midwest Region External Affairs Office, engaged millions of people across the country about monarchs and pollinator conservation.



Many Midwest Region staff and stations worked with their local communities to create butterfly gardens and pollinator habitat on and off Service lands for monarchs and other pollinators. Credit: Courtney Celley, USFWS



Midwest Region Receives the 2015 Monarch Challenge Award for Outreach & Education. Staff pictured left to right: Aaron Woldt (Deputy Assistant Regional Director - Fisheries), John Weber (Environmental Contaminants Specialist - Columbia Field Office), Becky Esser (Refuge Biologist - Detroit Lakes WMD), Regional Director Tom Melius, and Deputy Regional Director Charlie Wooley. Credit: USFWS

Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois, and the Midwest Landscape Conservation Cooperatives worked with the St. Louis *Milkweeds for Monarch Program* to educate people about monarchs and support community-driven habitat enhancement. This sparked interest in engaging major cities with monarch conservation and a partnership with the Chicago Field Museum was born.

Iron River Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin engaged the Iron River Elementary School's fifth grade class in planting a butterfly garden and sowing an acre of milkweed.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge hosted a monarch tagging event attended by U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, Director Dan Ashe and youth from Twin Cities Metro Area. At this event, staff conducted interactive plays to teach elementary kids about the life cycle of monarchs.

These accomplishments are just some of the ways our region got involved with monarchs. There were and are many other monarch projects. Each of your efforts helped us achieve the Monarch Challenge Education & Outreach Award!

In addition to the Education & Outreach Award, there were two other 2015 Monarch Challenge Awards up-for-grabs: Congratulations to the Region 6 for winning the Restoration and Enhancement Award and Region 1 for taking home the

Monitoring and Research Award.

You are the reason we excel in monarch outreach and engagement. Thank you for all of your hard work last year. This year, let's build on the engagement and excitement of 2015 and make 2016 another great year!

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Meeting of the Minds

BY JENNA TEWS, LUDINGTON BIOLOGICAL STATION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Ludington Biological Station recently hosted the bi-annual Sea Lamprey Workshop in Traverse City, Michigan.

Every two years the Service, along with partners from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission

(GLFC), Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), gather to discuss all facets of the Sea Lamprey Control (Program). Numerous researchers from U.S. and Canadian Universities were present to share significant findings relevant to the Program. All Program staff is involved with presenters ranging from field technicians to graduate researchers all the way up to senior managers.



Sharing Program knowledge between Service offices is another benefit of the workshop. From left to right: Jason Krebill, Technician Ludington Biological Station; Jamie Criger, Technician Marquette Biological Station; Matthew Lipps, Biologist Ludington Biological Station. Credit: Mara Koenig, USFWS



Dale Burkett, Sea Lamprey Control Program Director with the GLFC, presents Bob Adair (USFWS- retired) with a congratulatory letter of recognition for his years of service and accomplishments with the Sea Lamprey Control Program. Credit: Mara Koenig, USFWS

program of integrated sea lamprey control in U.S. waters of the Great Lakes in partnership with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

The two day workshop opened with Program news, updates, and accolades from Program leaders with the Service, DFO, and GLFC. A wide array of topics was covered, ranging from biological issues to new and innovative technology. Roughly twenty presentations were given including a Plenary Keynote by recently retired Sea Lamprey Control Program Manager Bob Adair in which he reflected upon 18 years in Sea Lamprey Control. The second day of the workshop included breakout sessions for some of the larger Program areas to discuss updated protocols, share improvements in equipment, and collaborate on field activities for the upcoming season. The workshop provides a venue for the 'meeting of the minds' to share the latest and greatest in the continuing battle against Sea Lamprey in the Great Lakes.

The Sea Lamprey Management Program continues to work closely with partners to control populations of sea lampreys in tributaries of the Great Lakes to protect the fishery and related economic activities in the basin (an estimated annual benefit of more than \$7 billion/year to the region). The Service delivers a



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Fish Tails

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Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Celebrates Wetlands

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON, ALPENA FWCO – WATERFORD, MI SUB-STATION

Every year people all across the world gather on February 2nd to celebrate World Wetland's Day. Starting in 1997, World Wetland's Day was established to honor the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of 1971, and to serve as a reminder of the importance wetlands to natural ecosystems and human health. Specifically, southeast Michigan has been celebrating this day for the past seven years at Carlson High School in Gibraltar, Michigan. This annual celebration of World Wetland's Day started when Humbug Marsh, located in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and just two short miles from the high school, was designated Michigan's only "Wetland of International Importance."

This year staff from the Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) – Waterford substation partnered with our counterparts from the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Seney National Wildlife Refuge, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, National Park Service, and other state and local agencies to participate in World Wetland's Day. Over 20 interactive displays and presentations taught students the importance of these unique habitats and their benefit to various organisms including humans. The Alpena FWCO staff took along two young Lake Sturgeon, photos and videos of adult Lake Sturgeon, Asian Carp mounts, examples of tags and sampling gear, and various handouts and stickers for students to enjoy. The focus was on teaching students about the life history of Lake Sturgeon, methods used to catch fish, the data that is collected from them, and the importance of preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. The Alpena FWCO staff also instilled in the students that within the Detroit Metro area, they have a number amazing natural resources right in their backyard.

Curiosity got the best of many students. Students flocked to booths containing live animals, including the Alpena FWCO's lake sturgeon. A fox snake, wood turtle, and barred owl were also popular. Several asked if the sturgeon were little sharks or catfish, and for others there was the look of surprise and shock when they saw photos of adult sturgeon six and a half feet long and learned the fish may be 70 years old.

Approximately 2,500 middle and high school students from throughout the region attended this year's event. The Alpena FWCO and students enjoyed interacting with one another and learning about significance of wetlands, and additionally, everyone went home with a better understanding of the great resources located in southeast Michigan.

Cabin Fever Reliever Aids Monarchs

BY MARK STEINGRAEBER, LA CROSSE FWCO

The Midwest Fisheries Center (La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, La Crosse Fish Health Center, and Whitney Genetics Laboratory) and the Genoa National Fish Hatchery hosted more than 1,100 cabin-fever victims who visited the Service display booth during the 39th Annual La Crosse Boat, Sports, Travel, & RV Show held February 11-14 at the La Crosse Center.

Representatives from these offices and members of their Friends organization from Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge were here during the four-day, mid-winter event to greet many visitors who were eager to resume outdoor recreational pursuits on the nearby Upper Mississippi River once its ice cover melts. New on display this year and a very popular item was the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office's 10-foot stream table that is used to illustrate how flowing water can shape (and re-shape) the landscape.

In addition to learning about the variety of the ongoing fishery and aquatic habitat conservation program activities in the Service's Midwest Region, visitors were encouraged to take an active role in helping to reverse recent declines in the abundance of monarch butterflies by planting common milkweed this year. Three hundred seed packets and instructions for germination were distributed to visitors here with the potential to propagate 10,500 common milkweed plants this summer for the benefit of monarchs and other pollinators.

The opportunity to personally exchange natural resource information with the large, diverse audience that attends this annual, mid-winter event makes Service participation here a valuable outreach tool for all area offices.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fisheries, Midwest Region

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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.



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