

News Release

Midwest Region



5600 American Boulevard West, Suite 990, Bloomington, MN 55437
612-713-5360

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Contacts:

Rick Westerhof, 231 584-3553, Rick_Westerhof@fws.gov

Mark Holey, 920-866-1760, Mark_Holey@fws.gov

Katie Steiger-Meister, 612-713-5317, Katie_Steiger-Meister@fws.gov

Service Awards \$1.8 million for Fish and Wildlife Restoration in the Great Lakes Basin

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that \$1.83 million in federal funding has been awarded under the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act grant program to restore sustainable populations of fish and wildlife resources, and their habitats, in the Great Lakes Basin. Two regional projects and seven research and restoration grant projects funded will provide \$527,196 in non-federal partner match contributions.

“I am pleased that we can continue to support our partners as we work together to restore fish, wildlife and the lands and waters where they are found in the Great Lakes Basin,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius. “From the reintroduction of deepwater ciscoes to restoring habitat for Kirtland’s warbler, this year’s projects embody the spirit of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act.”

Since 1998, the Restoration Act has provided more than \$22.8 million dollars in federal funding to 148 research and restoration projects. When combined with required matching funds, this equates to more than \$33.9 million worth of benefits to Great Lakes fish, wildlife and the habitats they depend on. More than 80 organizations have contributed more than \$11.2 million in matching non-federal partner support. 2015 funded projects include:

Regional Projects—

Development of Propagation Strategies to Support Reintroduction of Deepwater Coregonids in Lake Ontario, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, \$318,750.

Phase 3 - Monitoring and Mapping of Avian Resources over Selected Areas of the Great Lakes to Support Related Resource Management, Great Lakes Commission, \$260,000.

Research and Restoration Grant Projects—

Evaluating the Cowbird Control Program to Reduce Conservation-Reliance of the Kirtland’s Warbler, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and National Zoological Park, \$100,284.

Boardman Dam Removal – Dam Removal #2, Conservation Resource Alliance, \$300,000.

Restoration of the Irwin Wet Prairie Priority Conservation Area, The Nature Conservancy, \$162,843.

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Understanding Lake Trout Spatial Structure and Spawning Habitat Occupancy in Lake Erie, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, \$153,933.

Restoring Habitat for the Federally Endangered Kirtland's Warbler, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, \$260,822.

Detection of Successful Reproduction of Lake Trout in Southern Lake Michigan, Illinois Natural History Survey and University of Illinois, \$177,316.

Post-Release Behaviour, Dispersal, Habitat Use and Survival of Hatchery-Reared Bloater Using Acoustic Telemetry, Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research and University of Windsor, \$102,593.

The Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act is a powerful tool to help support research and conservation in the Great Lakes Basin. It is in part supported by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which provided \$1.5 million in 2015 funding.

Following, a sample of grant recipients explain their projects and how funding will be used on-the-ground:

“The Service has removed cowbirds throughout the breeding range of Kirtland's Warbler to protect the species from nest parasitism since 1972. This management action successfully increased the reproductive output of the species, but proceeded without a full understanding of the intensity of trapping necessary to sustain Kirtland's populations. Our research will determine if the current level of cowbird trapping can be reduced to minimize conservation-reliance of the species and decrease the cost of the trapping program,” said Dr. Peter Marra, Migratory Bird Center, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, National Zoological Park speaking about the evaluation of the Cowbird Control Program.

"Lake Ontario is the only Great Lake where deepwater coregonids are considered extirpated," said Patricia Riexinger, Director of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Fish Wildlife and Marine Resources. "Successful execution of this project will greatly enhance ongoing efforts to re-establish bloater in Lake Ontario, a critical element in restoring native lake trout and ecological function in the lake's offshore benthic zone. Also, the fish husbandry techniques developed for Lake Ontario will be applicable to coregonid restoration efforts throughout the Great Lakes, rendering these initiatives more efficacious and cost effective."

For more information on the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, including how to apply for funding, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/fisheries/glfwra-grants.html>.

For more information on the Service's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funded projects, please visit www.fws.gov/GLRI.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.

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