



Fish Lines

**The Winter
of Fish Content**

**Fishin' and Fun
on the Hard Water**

Fish Lines

Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Program - Midwest Region

The Mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The vision of the Service's Fisheries Program is working with partners to restore and maintain fish and other aquatic resources at self-sustaining levels and to support Federal mitigation programs for the benefit of the American public. Implementing this vision will help the Fisheries Program do more for aquatic resources and the people who value and depend on them through enhanced partnerships, scientific integrity, and a balanced approach to conservation.

Features

4

The Winter of Fish Content

Many fish culture enhancements have occurred at the Pendills Creek NFH.
BY CURT FRIEZ, PENDILLS CREEK NFH

6

Fishin' and Fun on the Hard Water

Fisheries offices put on their "6th Annual Kids Ice Fishing Day."
BY DOUG ALOISI, GENOA NFH



-USFWS/DennisSmith
John Stegmeier, Gary Haiss and Pete Hrodey look for invasive sea lamprey transformers in a rotary screw trap.

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Fish Lines

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Ashlee Horne and Justin Chiotti of the Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office look at the identifying features of a freshwater mussel they found in a stream near Marshall, Michigan.

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Conservation Briefs 7-20

- 7 A Win-Win Experience
BY CAREY EDWARDS, IRON RIVER NFH
- 7 River Town Renaissance
BY COLBY WRASSE, COLUMBIA FWCO
- 8 Genoa NFH Volunteers Continue to Support the Mussel Cage Program
BY NATHAN ECKERT, GENOA NFH
- 9 Wisconsin Sturgeon Spearing Season
BY NICK BLOOMFIELD, LACROSSE FWCO
- 9 Wandering Fish of the Missouri River
BY COLBY WRASSE, COLUMBIA FWCO
- 10 Two Year Bait Fish Study Comes to a Close
BY BEKA MCCANN AND COREY PUZACH, LA CROSSE FHC
- 11 Klondikes in Quarantine!
BY ANGELA BARAN, GENOA NFH
- 12 Asian Carp Tissue Cell Culture
BY ERIC LEIS, LA CROSSE FHC
- 13 A Sporting Chance
BY MARK STEINGRAEBER, LACROSSE FWCO
- 13 Navigators U.S.A. Learn about Boating and Boat Safety
BY ANJANETTE BOWEN, ALPENA FWCO
- 14 Great Lakes Treaty Unit of the Alpena FWCO Performs Database Upgrade
BY STEPHEN LENART, ALPENA FWCO
- 15 A Map of Brook Trout
BY CAREY EDWARDS, IRON RIVER NFH
- 15 Level of sampling effort for Lake Michigan's Spring Assessment Survey Evaluated
BY DALE HANSON, GREEN BAY FWCO
- 16 Pendills Creek NFH Completes Coded-Wire Tag Retention Checks
BY CRYSTAL LEGAULT ANDERSEN PENDILLS CREEK NFH
- 17 Strategic Planning Efforts Aimed at Expanding Local Watershed Restoration Committee
BY ANDREA ANIA, ALPENA FWCO
- 18 Great Lakes Focus for 2011 USFWS - Wisconsin Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Professional Session
BY TED KOEHLER, ASHLAND FWCO
- 19 New Employees at Columbia FWCO
BY HILARY MEYER AND ZACK BROCK, COLUMBIA FWCO
- 18 Iron River NFH's 2011 YCC Program

Congressional Actions	21
Midwest Region Fisheries Divisions	22
Fisheries Contacts	23
Fish Tails	24

The Winter of Fish Content

BY CURT FRIEZ, PENDILLS CREEK NFH

This article will serve to explain the hard work and dedication it has taken to make lake trout produced at Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) more content while being raised here. The many enhancements that have occurred over the past several years are described below.

silt in the water greatly impacted the very young production fish by stressing them to the point that secondary infections could set in and cause mortality. In addition, the creek water is severely influenced by summer weather. As the temperature of the water increases, so does the metabolism of cold blooded animals such as fish, while the carrying capacity of oxygen in the water decreases. The creek water supply causes temperature stress on the fish even in the winter. The water can actually get too cold - slowing the metabolism of the fish to the point where they almost cease eating.



-USFWS

This rotating drum filter was a critical component needed to remove suspended solids or particles from the culture water supply at the Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery.

Pendills Creek NFH is dependent upon two open water sources; the primary source is Videans Creek and the secondary source Pendills Creek. Neither source provides optimal water for cold water species fish production. Both creeks have varying water conditions with regard to total dissolved solids, suspended solids and huge fluctuations in daily water temperatures.

The hatchery staff has had to operate conservatively and responsively with regard to the varying conditions and the resultant negative impacts on fish culture operations. In the past, during snow melt or major precipitation events, the amount of debris and

Understanding the limiting factors and stressors our fish are subjected to, how can we reduce their effects upon our fish? As I alluded to earlier, this was a long journey with several construction contracts including design and installation of new high tech equipment. There were several construction phases that had to occur here and these were not easy to accomplish. Environmental compliance needed to occur first. In order for hatchery enhancements to

precede, architectural design and engineering development needed to occur, along with ground surveys and even soils testing. Probably the largest and most difficult commitment came from the Regional Fisheries Program, to secure funding for these enhancements. It took several years of hard work and dedication by all staff to get to where we are now.

The following hatchery enhancements, although perhaps not perfect in every way, have made a huge difference in the quality of lake trout now produced at Pendills Creek NFH. These enhancements are listed in order of accomplishment:



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Construction of a new clear span metal building over all 16 raceways help control the environment for the cultured fish, and eliminates all fish predation issues that had been a constant stressor and a potential vector for bringing in fish disease.

1. The water filtration building was constructed with the eventual capability to filter 10,000 gallons of water per minute. The filtration system is composed of a single drum filter and low head oxygenators. Removal of suspended solids or particles in the water and oxygen supplementation (the the ability to boost oxygen levels) is now possible.

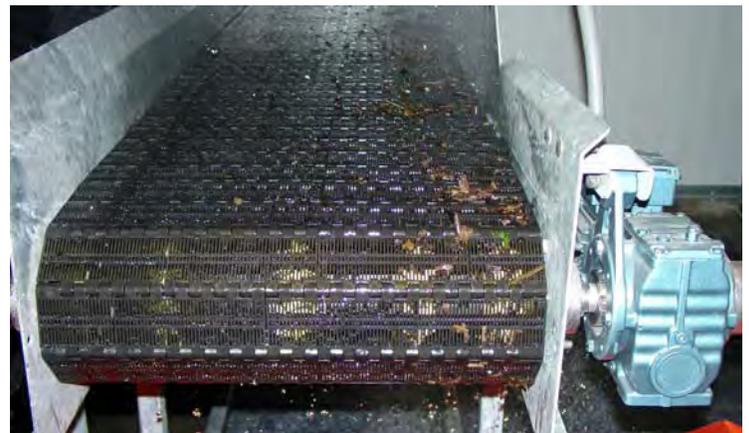
2. The old quonset hut-style raceway covers and deteriorated raceways (originally constructed in 1952) were replaced with a new clear span metal building and 16 raceways, respectively, to help control the environment for the fish, which eliminates all fish predation issues that had been a constant stressor and vector for potentially bringing in fish disease.

3. The addition of a traveling screen that removes the largest debris washing down in the creek water is now possible. This material amounts to literally tons of large debris now being removed before entering the raceways. Once this material is removed, the water then receives the finer filtering in the water filtration building.

4. The addition of ultra violet light disinfection, low head oxygenators to add additional oxygen supplementation capabilities, and another rotating drum filter, which will double the current total surface area of filtration, will be installed this year. Ultra violet light disinfection will kill bacteria, viruses and some parasites in the creek water. Additional low head oxygenators will allow full capacity water flow oxygen supplementation to occur.

As you can see, the Fisheries program is committed to lake trout rehabilitation, and these hatchery enhancements that cost several million dollars and years to accomplish speak

loudly that the Fish and Wildlife Service cares and has worked diligently to get to where we are today. Lake trout production at Pendills Creek NFH has greatly improved as demonstrated by increased growth rates, which are a direct result of reducing environmental stressors (water quality and oxygen supplementation). And there has been an overall increase in fish stocked into the Great Lakes due to exclusion of predators during the rearing cycle.



-USFWS

A traveling screen has been added to the water treatment process, to remove larger debris from the creek water. The intensive removal of particles/debris from the culture water source along with oxygen supplementation has greatly reduced environmental stressors to cultured fish.

Fishin' and Fun on the Hard Water

BY DOUG ALOISI, GENOA NFH

The Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Fisheries Services and the three La Crosse, Wisconsin (WI) area Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries offices put on their "6th Annual Kids Ice Fishing Day" for children ages 6-12 on January 28th at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH). Over 260 people were on the ice to try their hand at catching

rainbow trout through the ice. About 160 children and their parents got to make memories as the fish were biting very hard on a beautiful sunny but brisk day. The event kicked off with a brief primer on ice fishing safety with Eric Leis of the LaCrosse Fish Health Center. Eric is our ice fishing expert, with many hours each winter put on the ice re-fining his technique. Dale Hochhausen, game warden for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, also talked to the crowd about the value of fishing regulations in fisheries management and explained the catch limits to the attendees. Then it was off to fish on a stocked two acre pond frozen for the event.

Everyone caught a fish, and for some it was their first fish ever caught, through the ice or otherwise. The anglers were fed a light lunch provided for by the Friends Group. Also a first at the event was Fritz Perkins, retired National Wildlife Refuge employee who brought a horse drawn sleigh and provided rides to the kids. Fritz put many laps around the prairie restoration project to the delight of both parent and child alike. Many thanks to Fritz and all of our Friends Group members, partners and volunteers that made the day a lasting memory. One child was overheard remarking to their parent, "This was the best day ever!" It is hoped that this memory may provide a spark in each participant to place a high value on the outdoors, and the value of conserving it for future generations.



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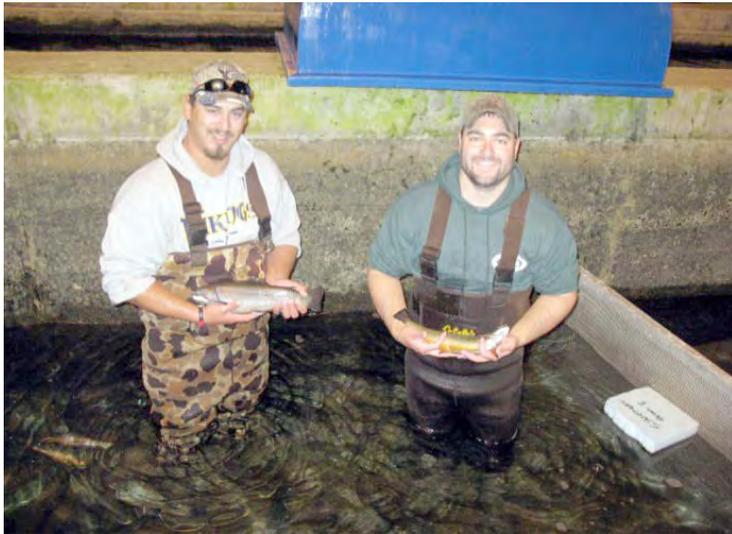
A proud fisherman displays his catch at the "6th Annual Kids Ice Fishing Day" held at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery.

For further info about the Genoa NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/genoa/>

A Win-Win Experience

BY CAREY EDWARDS, IRON RIVER NFH

Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) spawns thousands of lake trout and coaster brook trout each year. Eggs collected from these fish are used for restoration purposes in the upper Great Lakes. The spawning season began on September 6th, 2011 with the Klondike Reef strain of lake trout, followed by the Apostle Island strain in October. We look for Siskiwit



-USFWS
Roger Deschampe and EJ Isaac take time out of brook trout sorting to pose with some "keepers".

Harbor strain of coaster brook trout to begin spawning in November and Tobin Harbor strain of brook trout in December.

Fish are sorted for sexual maturity on Thursdays and eggs are collected every Tuesday. Approximately five million eggs are expected to be produced for Iron River's needs as well as for outside agencies including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Grand Portage Indian Community, Jordan River NFH, Genoa NFH, Allegheny NFH and United States Geological Survey.

Each fall, Iron River NFH welcomes volunteers from near and far to assist with spawning. Volunteers from as far away as Missouri and Michigan have graced us with their presence. Making a repeat appearance this year were biologists EJ Isaac and Roger Deschampe from Grand Portage Indian Community. Grand Portage has a newly operating hatchery and their biologists are coming to swap ideas and techniques on lake trout and brook trout aquaculture. Thanks to all the volunteers that help make our spawning season a success!

Partnerships are essential for effective fisheries conservation. Many agencies, organizations, and private individuals are involved in fisheries conservation and management, but no one can do it alone. Together, these stakeholders combine efforts and expertise to tackle challenges facing fisheries conservation. The success of these partnerships will depend on strong, two-way communications and accountability.

For further info about the Iron River NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/ironriver/>

River Town Renaissance

BY COLBY WRASSE, COLUMBIA FWCO

Missouri River Relief (MRR) has played a large role in this Missouri River renaissance. We at the Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) have been fortunate enough to assist MRR as they travel up and down the river educating people and raising awareness about the Missouri River. During October, Colby Wrasse and Brian Peoples of the Columbia FWCO took part in a MMR education event for 4th through 6th grade students from Washington, Missouri.

For our part of the event, we displayed live Missouri River fish species for the children to marvel upon. We have found that live fish are a great tool for focusing children's attention, and the fish make a great visual aid for us as we talk about issues such as: habitat changes on the Missouri River, invasive species, fish anatomy and physiology, and evolution. The children had a great time with the fish and

learned about the Missouri River in the process. The setting for the event was ideal as the river flowed just behind us. In fact, of all the towns we visit along the lower Missouri River, Washington has perhaps the strongest connection to the river. The old downtown section which borders the river is vibrant, with numerous restaurants and shops, and many people gather daily at Riverfront Park to boat, fish, picnic or just socialize.

Columbia FWCO staff and groups like Missouri River Relief (www.riverrelief.org) continue to raise awareness about the Missouri River in hopes that more communities will do as Washington has done, and embrace the Missouri River rather than turn away from it. River towns along the lower Missouri River are nearly as endangered as the pallid sturgeon that swim nearby. Sure the towns still exist, but most can no longer be considered "river towns" as their

connection with the river is a shadow of what it once was. The heart of many towns moved from the banks of the Missouri River, as commercial barge traffic never materialized and the constant threat of flooding caused most people and businesses to seek higher ground. Many people I talk with have lived their entire lives within a few miles of the Missouri River, but have never taken a boat ride on the river, never wet a line for catfish, or never even skipped a rock

For further info about the Columbia FWC: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/columbiafisheries/>

into those murky waters. While this seems sad, it is also understandable. Misconceptions about the Missouri River abound. Many people are frightened by the river, believing that the swift currents will “suck” your boat down, or that the water is so polluted that contact with the river is dangerous. However, the tide seems to be turning as people are once again becoming interested in “The Big Muddy.”

Genoa NFH Volunteers Continue to Support the Mussel Cage Program

BY NATHAN ECKERT, GENOA NFH

Our Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) style freshwater mussel rearing cages generally spend 18 months submerged in the waters of the Upper Mississippi River raising juvenile mussels. During this time, a significant amount of bio-fouling, siltation and rusting can occur on the wire screen and plywood bases of the cages. Because of this, we generally replace the wire screen and plywood on any cage showing signs of wear before they are placed in the river. Each cage top is held secure by over 50 rivets which must be drilled out prior to replacement, while each base has approximately 20 rivets. As you can imagine, it is a grand task to remove and replace wire and plywood on anywhere from 50 to 150 mussel cages.

On two separate days, a total of 19 individuals from several organizations aided in cage repair. Groups represented included the *Friends of Mississippi River Pool 9*, *Friends of the Upper Mississippi Fisheries Services*, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office and Rock Island District of the Army Corps of Engineers. After the dust settled and all the old wire and rivets had been swept up, the cage count revealed that 50 cage tops and over 75 bases had been repaired by the volunteers. These will be added to finished material already on-station for the coming season. We have high hopes for our mussel restoration program this year; if all goes well we may place out over 130 cages.



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Volunteers work to rivet new screen onto mussel culture cage frames at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery.



-USFWS

Volunteers remove and replace plywood on mussel cage bases at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery.

For further info about the Genoa NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/genoa/>

Wisconsin Sturgeon Spearing Season

BY NICK BLOOMFIELD, LACROSSE FWCO

On Saturday, February 11th, Dave Wedan and I of the La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) attended opening day of the lake sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago in east-central Wisconsin. Our mission was to assist Eric and Sarah Leis (La Crosse Fish Health Center) in collect-



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Opening day of the Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin, lake sturgeon spearing season brought bragging rights to Chris Haedt with her 179.9 pound, 79.6 inch female lake sturgeon, the 5th largest fish harvested since this unique fishery began in 1932.

For further info about the La Crosse FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrossefisheries/>

Wandering Fish of the Missouri River

BY COLBY WRASSE, COLUMBIA FWCO

Part of the joy of sampling fish on the Missouri River is that you never know what you might catch. Catching pallid sturgeon, lake sturgeon and big catfish is certainly fun, but sometimes it's those oddball fish that generate the most interest. Over the past couple of weeks, we have collected a few species that are extremely rare in the portion of the lower Missouri River which we sample.

ing tissue samples from harvested fish. As part of a long-term study of this big lake's most precious and closely managed native fish species, Fish and Wildlife Service crews from La Crosse have worked with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sturgeon management team here for more than a decade. DNR registration stations, located at sites around Lake Winnebago and three adjoining lakes, are staffed daily to continuously monitor the harvest. While Dave recorded data, I helped register fish, gathered eggs and collect stomach samples for other research projects.

Though it was bitterly cold, we kept relatively warm with fast paced action, processing each fish in an assembly-line manner. After a sturgeon's weight is recorded, the fish is placed on a table where the total length is measured and a metal registration tag affixed. Fish were also examined for implanted (rice-grain sized) electronic micro-chip tags (many pets now have one). Then a pectoral fin spine was removed to later estimate the age of the fish (i.e., like reading annual tree rings). Next, the fish was dissected to determine its sex and maturity. Cumulative tallies of this biological data can trigger an abrupt end to the scheduled 16-day season. Finally, Eric and Sarah took spleen and kidney samples that would later be screened for viral and bacterial disease pathogens.

To date, the results of this long-term survey indicate that a healthy population of lake sturgeon inhabits Lake Winnebago and the up-river lakes nearby.

The Fisheries Program maintains and implements a comprehensive set of tools and activities to conserve and manage self-sustaining populations of native fish and other aquatic resources. These tools and activities are linked to management and recovery plans that help achieve restoration and recovery goals, provide recreational benefits, and address Federal trust responsibilities. Sound science, effective partnerships, and careful planning and evaluation are integral to conservation and management efforts.

cool, clear water, so it was quite a surprise to find one in “The Big Muddy.” Rainbow trout are commonly stocked in streams and lakes of the Midwest and can be found in the upper basin of the Missouri River. The individual fish we caught may have washed down from



-USFWS/ColbyWrasse

Zach Brock holds a a rainbow trout that was captured during a fishery assessment on the Missouri River, a rare occurrence on the “Big Muddy.”

the upper Missouri River, or washed out of a tributary stream.

In early February, we collected a northern pike and a white perch from the Missouri River near New Haven, Missouri. The 27 inch northern pike was only the second specimen our office has ever collected from the Missouri River. While northern pike are fairly common in upper portions of the River, they are rare within the State of Missouri, which lies on the southern edge of the range for this cool water species.

A white perch was also the second such specimen our office has collected from the Missouri River, and the first since 2003. White perch are native to the Atlantic Coast, but were introduced to Nebraska in 1964. These prolific spawners can become invasive and have the potential to displace native species in some bodies of water.

The appearance of “unusual” species in the lower River this year was predictable. Record flooding in the South Dakota/Nebraska portions of Missouri River during 2011 most certainly displaced many fish downstream. While species like rainbow trout and northern pike can survive the winter months in the lower Missouri River, these species would not fare well during the summer when water temperatures can reach 90°F and water clarity can be greatly reduced. Our collection of these species is a reminder of how interconnected our bodies of water are and the great potential for fish to become displaced during floods. The appearance of potentially invasive species like white perch underscores the necessity to take care when introducing non-native species into reservoirs, because these fish many times find their way into our rivers.

For further info about the Columbia FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/columbiafisheries/>

Two Year Bait Fish Study Comes to a Close

BY BEKA MCCANN AND COREY PUZACH, LA CROSSE FHC

December of 2011 marked the end of a two year long bait fish study conducted by staff at the La Crosse Fish Health Center (FHC). The lab began testing bait fish, including fathead minnows, golden shiners and white suckers, in February of 2010. The study was the result of a legal settlement by four baitfish companies that were charged with violating the Lacey Act by importing bait fish from outside the state without valid import permits and health certificates. The Lacey Act makes it unlawful “to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any fish or wildlife

taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any law or regulation of any state or in violation of any foreign law.”

The investigation was a joint effort between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The companies pled guilty to violations of the Lacey Act and were sentenced to fines, probation, up to two random site visits per year, and testing of monthly imports for two years. The companies submitted a list of their anticipated imports for each month and sample fish lots were picked at random to be tested. All testing occurred at the

expense of the baitfish companies. All fish were tested for the presence of viral and bacterial pathogens and parasites. Over the course of two years, many parasites were detected, the most serious being the invasive Asian Tapeworm. The lab also isolated several species of pathogenic bacteria including *Aeromonas salmonicida* and *Renibacterium salmoninarum*. Also, the lab was able to detect the presence of many viruses including golden shiner virus, fathead minnow nidovirus and a number of nontarget and currently unknown viruses. These unknown viruses are currently undergoing further characterization, including electron microscopy, sequencing and genetic analysis.

For further info about the La Crosse FHC: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/LaCrosseFishHealthCenter/>



-USFWS/BeckyLasee

This golden shiner was infected with Asian tapeworm.

Klondikes in Quarantine!

BY ANGELA BARAN, GENOA NFH

The construction project that started in June of 2011 is now finally complete! Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) received funding to renovate the current isolation facility, upgrading it to a full quarantine facility. This upgrade will allow the station to



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Construction workers prepare the site for pouring concrete floors in the expanded quarantine facility at Genoa National Fish Hatchery.

bring in wild fish and eggs to maintain the genetic diversity in captive brood stocks, without compromising the hatchery's diverse fish and mussel program.

Genoa NFH supports the National Brood Stock Program by isolating wild lake trout and brook trout eggs for Iron River NFH, as well as for the lake trout rehabilitation programs in the Northeast Region. In

addition, warm and cool water brood fish will be isolated from wild populations, awaiting disease testing results before supplementing the station's captive brood fish.

A drum filter, UV sterilization unit and holding tank were installed to allow any water leaving the facility to be treated before entering station ponds, preventing possible disease transmission. The final walk through of the building was completed on January 12. Almost immediately afterwards, the water was turned on, tanks were prepped and the Klondike Reef strain lake trout were moved out to their new home!



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A new drum filter and UV sterilization unit will be used in the new quarantine facility at Genoa National Fish Hatchery.

For further info about the Genoa NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/genoa/>

Asian Carp Tissue Cell Culture

BY ERIC LEIS, LA CROSSE FHC

A meeting was held with staff from the La Crosse Fish Health Center (FHC), Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center, and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with the hope of finding a piscicide that can be used to fight the Asian carp invasion. The first step in the process is to develop cell lines from bighead and silver carp tissues. Once tissue cell culture lines have been established, then the hope is to test an array of chemicals to determine if they have the potential for application as a piscicide. While the cells are not yet ready to be tested, they are

showing promising signs that perhaps they will be ready soon for chemical testing. Until they are ready, all we can do is wait and watch the cells grow.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic invasive species are one of the most significant threats to fish and wildlife and their habitats. Local and regional economies are severely affected with control costs exceeding \$123 billion annually. The Fisheries Program has focused its efforts on preventing introductions of new aquatic invasive species, detecting and monitoring new and established invasives, controlling established invasives, providing coordination and technical assistance to organizations that respond to invasive species problems, and developing comprehensive, integrated plans to fight aquatic invasive species.

For further info about the La Crosse FHC: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/LaCrosseFishHealthCenter/>

Do *Your* Part ...

Clean *ALL* equipment ...

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Clean Water

Do *Your* Part ...

Make a Difference!

A Sporting Chance

BY MARK STEINGRAEBER, LACROSSE FWCO

Three Fish and Wildlife Service offices including the La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO), Genoa National Fish Hatchery, and Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge - Winona District hosted about 1,400 spring-fever victims who came to the Fish and Wildlife Service display booth during the “35th annual La Crosse Boat, Sports, Travel, & RV Show” held February 9-12 at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Representatives from these offices and several folks from the *Friends of the Upper Mississippi Fishery Services* were here throughout the four-day event to greet visitors and report on a variety of local/regional Fish and Wildlife Service programs and activities. An attractive display of posters, maps, photos, brochures, watch cards and aquaria containing fish and mussels were prominently displayed near a main entrance to the exhibition hall. Key topics of

conversation included invasive species, mussels, lake sturgeon, paddling opportunities, and individual actions to improve water quality.

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

As the population in the United States continues to grow, the potential for adverse impacts on aquatic resources, including habitat will increase. At the same time, demands for responsible, quality recreational fishing experiences will also increase. The Service has a long tradition of providing opportunities for public enjoyment of aquatic resources through recreational fishing, habitat restoration, and education programs and through mitigating impacts of Federal water projects. The Service also recognizes that some aquatic habitats have been irreversibly altered by human activity (i.e. - dam building). To compensate for these significant changes in habitat and lost fishing opportunities, managers often introduce non-native species when native species can no longer survive in the altered habitat.

For further info about the La Crosse FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrossefisheries/>

Navigators U.S.A. Learn about Boating and Boat Safety

BY ANJANETTE BOWEN, ALPENA FWCO

The Alpena chapter of “Navigators U.S.A.” learned about boats and boating safety at the Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) on January 10th. Biologist Anjanette Bowen met with the group of 16 students and crew leader Debbie Scherf. The students were introduced to the Fish and Wildlife Service, toured the facility, and viewed the variety of work boats on station. They learned about necessary boating gear and general boating reference points

including port, starboard, bow and stern. Boat shape and function were discussed. The students also learned about the importance and use of different floatation devices. They will use the information they have learned to teach others and toward earning a medal in boating. The Alpena FWCO will continue to work with the Navigators U.S.A. group through the winter to provide information on a number of natural resource topics.

For further info about the Alpena FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/alpena/index.htm>

Great Lakes Treaty Unit of the Alpena FWCO Performs Database Upgrade

BY STEPHEN LENART, ALPENA FWCO

During the months of December and January, staff members of the Great Lakes Treaty unit completed a comprehensive overhaul of the main database used to house data on Great Lakes fish species. Although the main structural components of the existing database were retained in the new version, the data were reorganized to allow greater functionality when generating queries and reports. Additional changes included the segregation of aging-related analyses from the main bio data table and the creation of forms to make data entry more efficient. Proper organization is a key component of the pathway that leads from “data” to “information,” and we expect these efforts to help streamline this process.

Conserving this Nation’s fish and other aquatic resources cannot be successful without the partnership of Tribes; they manage or influence some of the most important aquatic habitats both on and off reservations. In addition, the Federal government and the Service have distinct and unique obligations toward Tribes based on trust responsibility, treaty provisions, and statutory mandates. The Fisheries Program plays an important role in providing help and support to Tribes as they exercise their sovereignty in the management of their fish and wildlife resources on more than 55 million acres of Federal Indian trust land and in treaty reserved areas.



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Lake Huron Whitefish

For further info about the Alpena FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/alpena/index.htm>

A Map of Brook Trout

BY CAREY EDWARDS, IRON RIVER NFH

Every once in a while, something out of the norm arises and a unique opportunity presents itself. A researcher from Purdue University inquired about making a linkage map for brook trout. A linkage map contains information on the DNA sequence of an organism's chromosomes and the placement of genes on that chromosome. These maps provide resources for other genetic studies that can look for associations between certain phenotypes and genes that control different traits such as growth rate or age of maturation.



-USFWS photos

(Left) Two strains of coaster brook trout were crossed to produce hybrid brook trout eggs, and individual paired matings were incubated in separate chambers. **(Right)** Tissue samples and eggs from individual crosses were then packaged separately in wet cloths for shipment to Purdue University, where DNA will be extracted and analyzed.

Science and technology form the foundation of successful fish and aquatic resource conservation and are used to structure and implement monitoring and evaluation programs that are critical to determine the success of management actions. The Service is committed to following established principles of sound science.

These maps are typically created through multigenerational crosses using individuals with known pedigrees and can take several years. Very little genetic information exists for brook trout; and as of late, many researchers have been trying to genetically discern the differences between coaster and resident brook trout. Coaster brook trout spend most of their lives roaming the shorelines of deep lakes such as Lake Superior and enter streams to spawn in the fall, while resident brook trout spend their entire lives in streams and tend to be much smaller than coasters.

To create this linkage map, a hybrid cross between two known strains of coaster brook trout was requested. The Iron River National Fish Hatchery's (NFH) captive brood stock inventory includes nearly 5,000 Tobin Harbor and Siskiwit Bay strains of coaster brook trout and was able to fulfill this request. A cross between six Tobin Harbor females and six Siskiwit Bay males was completed. Tissue samples (fin clips) from each parent were collected to be cross referenced with the gametes collected. Eggs were incubated until the eyed stage, and all viable eggs were shipped to Purdue University for further rearing where DNA will be extracted at a later date. The staff hopes that the results lead to insight on genetic characteristics that determine whether an individual fish is a coaster or resident brook trout.

For further info about the Iron River NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/ironriver/>

Level of sampling effort for Lake Michigan's Spring Assessment Survey Evaluated

BY DALE HANSON, GREEN BAY FWCO

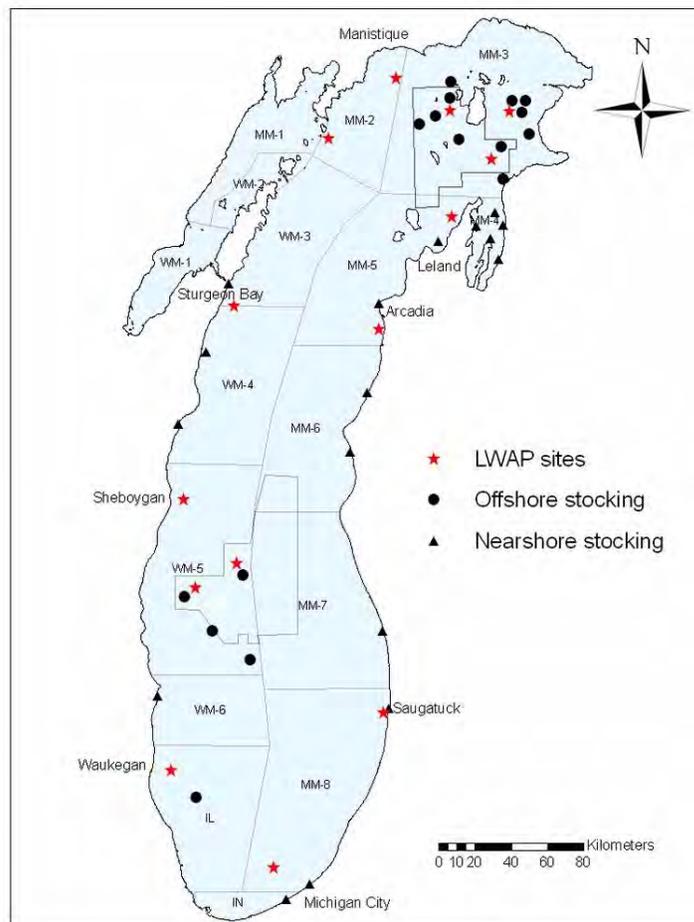
The Lake-wide Assessment Plan (LWAP) spring gillnet survey represents a joint effort among federal, state and tribal agencies to evaluate lake trout populations in Lake Michigan. This survey is specifically used to determine whether the lake trout rehabilitation objective is met: "Increase the average catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) to >25 lake trout/1000

feet of graded mesh gill net (2.5-6.0 inch) over-night set lifted during spring stock assessments pursuant to the lakewide assessment in lake trout management units MM-3, WM-5, and at Julian's Reef by 2015". The survey is also used to recover coded-wire tagged (CWT) fish that were tagged, to enable evaluations of

relative survival among various strains at offshore and nearshore stocking locations.

Historically, six gillnet lifts were performed at two offshore locations (Northern and Midlake Refuges) and at nine near-shore locations distributed throughout the lake. However, gillnet catches within a sampling location are often variable and this can inhibit the usefulness of the data in measuring abundance thresholds and evaluating strain and stocking location differences. Dale Hanson of the Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) recently performed a power analysis and simulations to evaluate how to best allocate gillnetting effort for the spring LWAP survey.

The results of this analysis were presented to Lake Michigan managers at the winter Lake Michigan Technical Committee meeting in Chesterton, Indiana, January 24th and 25th. Recommendations from the analysis suggest more sampling effort is needed in offshore Refuge areas and the survey design is being modified to include five offshore sampling locations in addition to the nine near-shore locations (map 1). These changes will improve the survey's ability to measure whether rehabilitation objectives are being met and to assess which strains or stocking locations contribute most to recovery goals.



This map shows the 14 Lake-wide Assessment Plan survey locations (five offshore refuge sites and nine near-shore sites) relative to the offshore and near-shore lake trout stocking sites.

For further info about the Green Bay FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Fisheries/library/StationFactSheets/greenbay.pdf>

Pendills Creek NFH Completes Coded-Wire Tag Retention Checks

BY CRYSTAL LEGAULT ANDERSEN PENDILLS CREEK NFH

Biologists from the Green Bay National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NFWCO) completed the coded-wire tagging (CWT) and adipose fin clips on Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery's (NFH) 1.2 million lake trout from August 9 through August 25, 2011. All fish were coded-wire tagged and adipose fin clipped using 2 of Northwest Marine Technology's Auto Fish System trailers. Each CWT contains a code which enables fishery managers to determine the age, strain, stocking location, producing fish hatchery, and stocking event for the fish. All fish with

CWT's are adipose clipped, and when caught and the heads returned, the CWT can be removed and provide the vital information to resource managers.

Pendills Creek released 200,000 CWT fish into Lake Huron in October 2011 as fall fingerlings, and the remaining 1,000,000 will be released into Lakes Michigan and Huron during spring 2012 as yearlings. Before any of the tagged and clipped fish are loaded onto fish distribution trucks, a sampling of fish from each group are checked for the retention of the tags and quality of the adipose clips.

For further info about the Pendills Creek NFH/Sullivan Creek NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Fisheries/library/StationFactSheets/pendills.pdf>

Strategic Planning Efforts Aimed at Expanding Local Watershed Restoration Committee

BY ANDREA ANIA, ALPENA FWCO

The Rifle River Watershed Restoration Committee (RRWRC) held its second Strategic Planning Session on January 11th. This meeting was coordinated and led by Huron Pines to increase local knowledge of the RRWRC's presence in the watershed and encourage participation by private landowners and interested citizens. Huron Pines is a non-governmental conservation organization located in Grayling, Michigan.



-Michigan DNR 2002

The Rifle River has about 50 river miles of the mainstream and 60 river miles of tributaries designated as wild-scenic river under Michigan's 1970 Natural River Act. The Natural Rivers Act also provides zoning set-backs and restrictions to "preserve, protect and enhance the Rifle River environment in a natural state for the use and enjoyment by all generations."

The majority of watershed councils/committees in Michigan are run by volunteer community members. They develop partnerships with state, federal, tribal and non-governmental organizations, which provide technical expertise, coordination and funding to assist

For further info about the Alpena FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/alpena/index.htm>

Loss and alteration of aquatic habitats are principal factors in the decline of native fish and other aquatic resources and the loss of biodiversity. Seventy percent of the Nation's rivers have altered flows, and 50 percent of waterways fail to meet minimum biological criteria.

with restoration planning and implementation. To date, the RRWRC has been composed mainly of non-governmental organizations and state and federal agencies, but it has had limited involvement from local community members. Community leadership is essential for the long-term success of a watershed organization and promoting watershed protection through local decision making.

The RRWRC was officially formed in the mid-1990s to increase coordination and collaboration of public and private partners to reduce nonpoint source pollution in the watershed. Prior to the council's formation, the Saginaw Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited led habitat rehabilitation efforts aimed at improving the recreational trout fishery.

The RRWRC has many achievements over the years including planning, restoration and securing funding to benefit the watershed. Huron Pines recently applied for and received \$382,000 through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agencies Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) for the Rifle River Watershed Nonpoint Implementation Project, which will be implemented along with partners over the next several years (2011-2013). Grant deliverables include updating the watershed management plan, implementing habitat improvement projects, and promoting environmental stewardship.

The Rifle River Watershed Nonpoint Implementation Grant is providing an opportunity to revitalize the RRWRC and expand community involvement. The Fish and Wildlife Service will be partnering with Huron Pines on habitat improvement projects, such as road-stream crossing to reduce sediment and increase fish passage. This will be accomplished through the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife and National Fish Passage programs.

Great Lakes Focus for 2011 USFWS - Wisconsin Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Professional Session

BY TED KOEHLER, ASHLAND FWCO

The “2011 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Wisconsin Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFWP) Professional Session” was hosted by the Ashland Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO). This meeting of PFWP professional staff from the entire state is hosted each year by an office which implements the program. During the session,



-USFWS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Wisconsin staff pose for a picture.

practices and ideas are shared and restoration projects are visited, assessed and compared. The knowledge gained from these sessions benefits all Wisconsin PFWP personnel and the fish and wildlife projects in which they are involved.

This year’s session took place in northern Bayfield County, Wisconsin, and focused on Great Lakes coastal habitat restoration. PFWP biologists traveled in two boats captained by natural resource staff from the Park Service and toured restoration sites.

The Fish and Wildlife Service works closely with Apostle Islands National Lakeshore to improve coastal habitat for trust species. In recent years, the two agencies have worked together to implement three on-the-ground habitat restoration projects to improve

coastal dune habitat and other important areas of the park. These projects have benefited many species of migratory birds including the federally endangered piping plover. We also work together to monitor and protect nesting piping plovers at Apostle Islands, the furthest west known nesting area for the Great Lakes population.

Other highlights of the session were learning about fishery restoration and research taking place at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point Experimental Fish Hatchery. A wetland project has also taken place at the hatchery in cooperation with the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and this site’s wild rice and waterfowl improvements were examined. Private landowner stream and riparian projects were also visited. In the end, participants came away with knowledge that will help with fish and wildlife habitat project development along the many miles of Great Lakes coast that Wisconsin has to offer.



-USFWS

The restoration site at the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore - Stockton Island is a popular area for beach-goers.

For further info about the Ashland FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/ashland/>

New Employees at Columbia FWCO

BY HILARY MEYER AND ZACK BROCK, COLUMBIA FWCO

My name is Hilary Meyer and I joined the Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) in December of 2011 after recently completing my master's degree at South Dakota State University (SDSU). I am originally from Wisconsin, where I completed my bachelor's degree in Fisheries at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point (UWSP). Like many college students, I held a number of different jobs during my time at UWSP. I worked in the Aquatic Biomonitoring Lab, Conservation Genetics Lab, Histology Lab as well as summer jobs with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest, and a student ambassador position in Nyumbai Village, Kenya. My work at SDSU focused on pallid sturgeon physiology. My project was designed to explore whether pallid sturgeon physiology (metabolism, consumption and growth) follows a latitudinal gradient throughout the species' range. My interests include large river ecology, population dynamics and sturgeon physiology. I am thrilled to be starting my career with the Fish and Wildlife Service here in Columbia.

My name is Zach Brock and I was born and raised in the north Georgia mountains in a little town called Young Harris. My love for the outdoors developed from an early age as I explored the mountains hunting and fishing. I received a degree in biology with an emphasis in fish and wildlife from University of South Florida.

Immediately after college I spent two seasons with Fish and Wildlife Service in King Salmon, Alaska. There I worked on estimating sockeye and Coho salmon escapement using a fixed weir, used gill nets

to collect baseline data on tundra ponds, and snorkeled to gather juvenile Coho data. All of this was done amid Alaska's ruggedness and wildlife. I also worked on developing non-lethal aging techniques for salmonids using fin rays during the winter months.

My next job was on the Colorado River as a seasonal employee for Fish and Wildlife Service in Grand Junction, Colorado. My main task there was to work on the recovery of endangered fishes in the Colorado and San Juan rivers. We used trammel nets, gill nets, fyke nets and electro-fishing rafts and boats to capture fish in the rivers. We also had to maintain fish ladders and help to rear endangered fish at hatcheries.

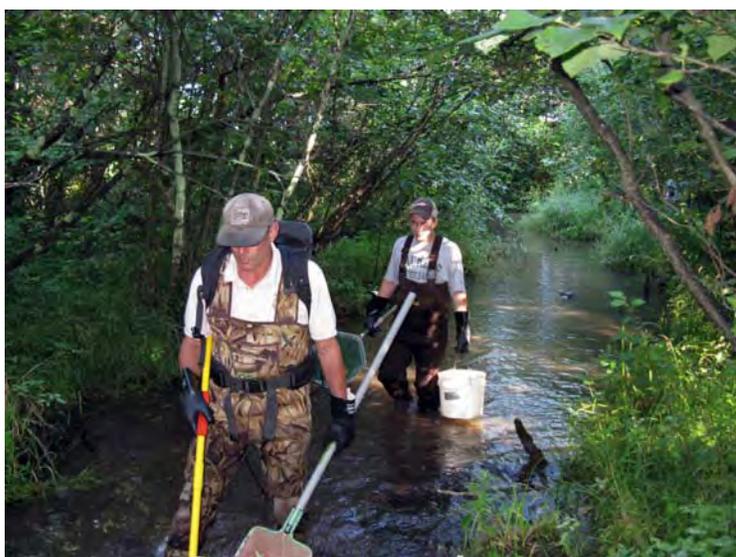
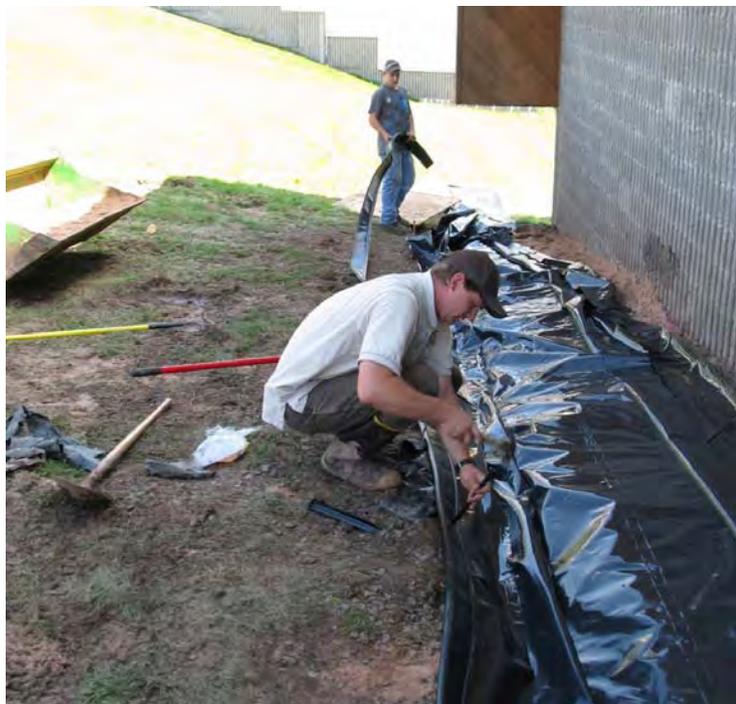
I then took my experience to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to lead sampling crews on a brook trout restoration project. This involved hiking, backpack shocking, use of piscicides, and brook trout genetic work. We used snorkeling to monitor the endangered smoky madtom. Three years later finds me here in Columbia, Missouri, where I hope to apply my experience working in unique systems and with rare fishes to the Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment Program. I look forward to working on the trawl boats, and using the other various capture methods to compile more information that will be useful in helping to monitor pallid sturgeon. I hope that my studies and past experiences will help to make me a valuable asset to this office.

The Fisheries Program relies on a broad range of professionals to accomplish its mission: biologists, managers, administrators, clerks, animal caretakers, and maintenance workers. Without their skills and dedication, the Fisheries Program cannot succeed. Employees must be trained, equipped and supported in order to perform their jobs safely, often under demanding environmental conditions, and to keep current with the constantly expanding science of fish and aquatic resource management and conservation.

For further info about the Columbia FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/columbiafisheries/>

Iron River NFH's 2011 YCC Program

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) began their Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program on June 20th, 2011 with Matt Peterson and Daniel Lundeen. Daniel decided he did not want to work at the hatchery after two weeks due to scheduling problems. We then picked up Brian Lind. Matt Peterson was only able to work for approximately one month, and then he had to travel to North Carolina to get settled in for school. Darrin Stewart was then able to work for about two weeks. The four were able to learn about the Fish and Wildlife Service's mission and more specifically the Iron River NFH's role in rehabilitating lake trout to the upper Great Lakes. They also were able to learn rudimentary carpentry, landscape and painting skills. Overall, it was a great and productive YCC season.



For further info about the Iron River NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/ironriver/>

Congressional Actions

S. 1201 (is) To conserve fish and aquatic communities in the United States through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation, to improve the quality of life for the people of the United States, and for other purposes. [Introduced in Senate]

S. 52 (is) To establish uniform administrative and enforcement procedures and penalties for the enforcement of the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and similar statutes, and for other purposes. [Introduced in Senate]

H.R. 2373 (ih) To establish a regulatory system and research program for sustainable offshore aquaculture in the United States exclusive economic zone, and for other purposes. [Introduced in House]

S. 1401 (is) To conserve wild Pacific salmon, and for other purposes. [Introduced in Senate]

S. 1494 (is) To reauthorize and amend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act. [Introduced in Senate]

H.R. 1160 (rh) To require the Secretary of the Interior to convey the McKinney Lake National Fish Hatchery to the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes. [Reported in House]

H.R. 2325 (ih) To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to build on and help coordinate funding for restoration and protection efforts of the 4-State Delaware River Basin region, and for other purposes. [Introduced in House]

H.R. 2351 (ih) To direct the Secretary of the Interior to continue stocking fish in certain lakes in the North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. [Introduced in House]

H.R. 1160 (eh) To require the Secretary of the Interior to convey the McKinney Lake National Fish Hatchery to the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes. [Engrossed in House]

S. 651 (is) To require the Secretary of the Interior to convey the McKinney Lake National Fish Hatchery to the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes. [Introduced in Senate]

H.R. 1160 (ih) To require the Secretary of the Interior to convey the McKinney Lake National Fish Hatchery to the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes. [Introduced in House]

S. 1266 (is) To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to build on and help coordinate funding for restoration and protection efforts of the 4-State Delaware River Basin region, and for other purposes. [Introduced in Senate]

H.R. 2834 (ih) To recognize the heritage of recreational fishing, hunting, and shooting on Federal public lands and ensure continued opportunities for these activities. [Introduced in House]

H.R. 1160 (rfs) To require the Secretary of the Interior to convey the McKinney Lake National Fish Hatchery to the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes. [Referred in Senate]

S. 1224 (is) To amend Public Law 106-392 to maintain annual base funding for the Upper Colorado and San Juan fish recovery programs through fiscal year 2023. [Introduced in Senate]

S. 632 (is) To amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to extend the authorized period for rebuilding of certain overfished fisheries, and for other purposes. [Introduced in Senate]

H.R. 521 (ih) To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to prevent the approval of genetically engineered fish. [Introduced in House]

S. 230 (is) To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to prevent the approval of genetically-engineered fish. [Introduced in Senate]

S. 1657 (is) To amend the provisions of law relating to sport fish restoration and recreational boating safety, and for other purposes. [Introduced in Senate]

H.R. 520 (ih) To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require labeling of genetically engineered fish. [Introduced in House]

H.R. 3069 (ih) To amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to reduce predation on endangered Columbia River salmon and other nonlisted species, and for other purposes. [Introduced in House]

H.R. 1646 (ih) To amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to preserve jobs and coastal communities through transparency and accountability in fishery management, and for other purposes. [Introduced in House]

Source is <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/bills/index.html>
Searched database by keyword = "fish"

Midwest Region Fisheries Divisions

National Fish Hatcheries

The Region's National Fish Hatcheries primarily focus on native fish restoration/rehabilitation by stocking fish and eggs, such as pallid and lake sturgeon and by developing and maintaining brood stocks of selected fish strains, such as lake trout and brook trout.

Hatcheries also provide technical assistance to other agencies, provide fish and eggs for research, stock rainbow trout in fulfillment of federal mitigation obligations and assist with recovery of native mussels and other native aquatic species.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices conduct assessments of fish populations to guide management decisions, perform key monitoring and control activities related to invasive, aquatic species; survey and evaluate aquatic habitats to identify restoration/rehabilitation opportunities; play a key role in targeting and implementing native fish and habitat restoration programs; work with private land owners, states, local governments and watershed organizations to complete aquatic habitat restoration projects under the Service's 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

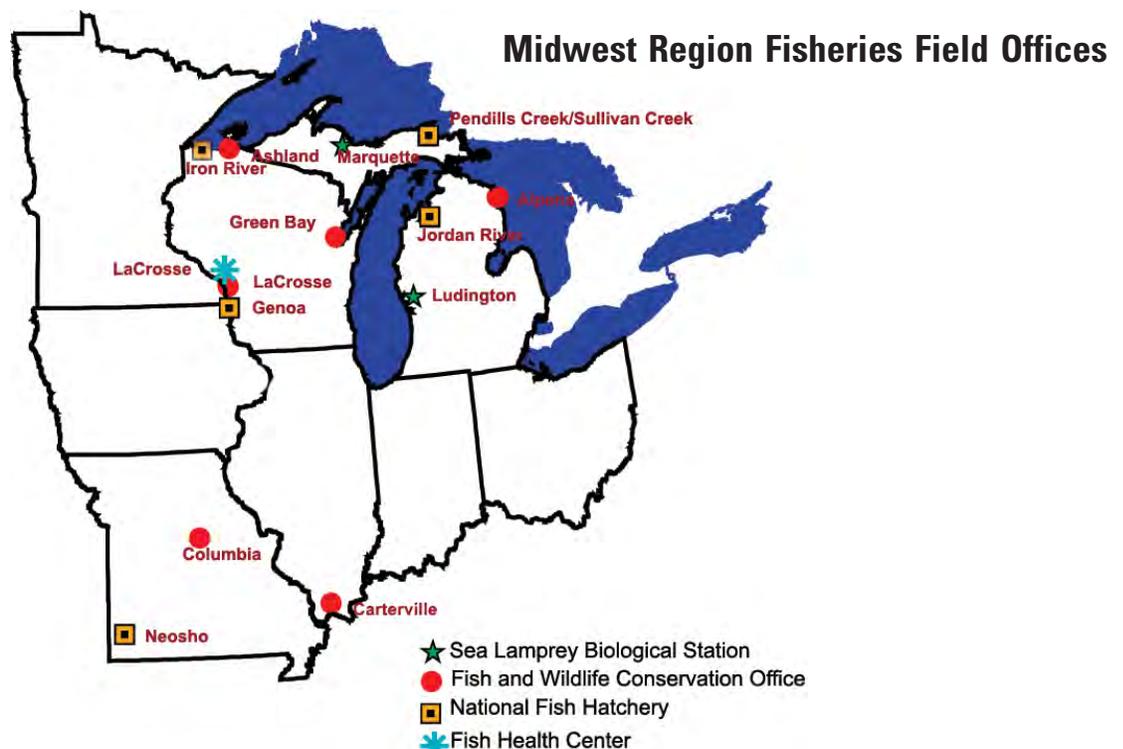
technical expertise to other Service programs addressing contaminants, endangered species, federal project review and hydro-power operation and relicensing; evaluate and manage fisheries on Service lands; and, provide technical support to 38 Native American tribal governments and treaty authorities.

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.



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Fish Tails

“Fish Tails” includes articles that are included in field station reports that are not published in the “Conservation Briefs.” These articles are categorized by focus area and includes the article title, author and field station. The website link, where the full article can be viewed, is highlighted in blue type.

Partnerships and Accountability

➤ [MICRA Paddlefish-Sturgeon Committee Meeting](#)

- Tracy Hill, Columbia FWCO

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

➤ [Pendills Creek NFH completes Coded-Wire Tag Retention Checks](#)

- Crystal LeGault-Anderson, Pendills Creek NFH

➤ [Pendills Creek NFH Seneca Lake Wild Eggs Are Now Fry](#)

- Crystal LeGault Andersen, Pendills Creek NFH

Aquatic Invasive Species

Public Use

➤ [Student Career Experience Program \(SCEP\) Student Chris Olds Speaks at Thunder Bay Junior High School Career Daze](#)

- Christopher Olds, Alpena FWCO
- [Northland College Lends a Helping Hand](#)
 - Carey Edwards, Iron River NFH

Cooperation with Native Americans

Leadership in Science and Technology

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Workforce Management



Todd Turner Announced as New Midwest Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries

Todd Turner has been selected as the Midwest Region’s Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries. Turner has been the Midwest Region’s Deputy Assistant Regional Director of Fisheries since 2009 and has been the Acting ARD for the past several months.

Turner’s extensive experience with the Midwest Region’s Fisheries Program made him an ideal candidate to fill this senior position within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He is a great example of an exceptional leader developed right here in the Midwest Region.

As Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries, Turner will provide region-wide leadership in the programs, issues and policies related to the protection of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest Region. He will develop short and long-term plans, objectives and priorities for the Midwest Fisheries program, as well as provide guidance to the Regional Director and other Service officials and managers regarding controversial and complex scientific, political and economic issues.

Prior to 2009, Turner was the Midwest Region’s Hatchery Program Leader beginning in 2001. He also served as Assistant Hatchery Manager in 1991 and eventually Hatchery Manager in 1995 at Genoa National Fish Hatchery. Turner started his career with the Service in 1989 at Sullivan Creek National Fish Hatchery, formally Hiawatha Forest National Fish Hatchery.

A Minnesota native, Turner is an alumnus of Bemidji State University. Before working for the Service, he served in the U.S. Army Reserves for 7 years and worked for the Leech Lake Reservation Department of Resource Management as a fisheries technician. A true outdoorsman, his hobbies include hunting, fishing, making maple syrup and snowmobiling. He is married to Laurie Turner, with whom he has two sons.

Katie Steiger-Meister, External Affairs