



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Midwest Region
Fisheries Program

fish lines



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Fish Lines

May 29, 2015
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Fish Tails

"**Fish Tails**" refers to articles that are submitted by field staff that do not appear as a feature in the current edition of Fish Lines. These articles provide examples of the diverse work that the Service's Midwest Fisheries Program and partners perform on behalf of our aquatic resources and for the benefit of the American public.

Field Notes

"**Field Notes**" is an online searchable database that showcases hundreds of employee-written summaries of field activities and accomplishments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from across the nation.



Urban Kids Fishing Derby!!!

BY BRUCE HALLMAN, NEOSHO NFH



Numerous kids and their families participated in the 10th annual Urban Kids Fishing Derby in Kansas City, Kansas. Credit: Courtesy of Urban American Outdoors

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) emphasizes engaging with others as we work to accomplish our mission. On Saturday, May 16, 2015, a burgeoning partnership between the Service and Urban American Outdoors TV was celebrated at the Tenth Annual Urban Kids Fishing Derby in Kansas City, Kansas. Initiated in June 2014, this partnership began with staff from the Neosho National Fish Hatchery (NFH) participating in a Kansas City, Missouri fishing event for inner city kids. Neosho management came to assist and support the event – not really knowing what to expect. Taking just a few dozen rods and reels with them, they were amazed at the turnout and the positive aspects of this outreach effort. It didn't take much convincing to get the Service and Neosho NFH involved for the next year's plans.



(Left to right) Neosho NFH Manager Dave Hendrix, USFWS Deputy Director Jim Kurth and Neosho NFH Assistant Hatchery Manager Rod May celebrate the day at the Urban Kids Fishing Derby. Credit: Courtesy of Urban American Outdoors

Over 400 youth and over 100 parents shared in a day of healthy outdoor fun this May, with many more helpers and onlookers present as well. These were young people and families that hadn't had the opportunity to enjoy the fun of fishing before. "The whole event was an excellent teaching moment for us to expose them to the importance of conservation," said Neosho's hatchery manager David Hendrix. Lots of media were on hand, with TV, radio and newspaper coverage of the fun, and a great time was had by all participants. This year, the Neosho NFH staff brought over 160 poles with them to lend to families that needed them. They noted that quite a number of the people had never used a rod and reel – they were only familiar with simple cane poles if anything at all! The hatchery brought worms and corn to use as bait, and with a local bike club helping with snags, lost hooks and other problems, the kids never skipped a beat. This was truly a joyful family outing for the hundreds that attended.

At Neosho NFH preparations started many days prior to the four hour event. The preceding Wednesday, staff went to inspect the site – a spring-fed pond on the campus of the Kansas City Kansas

Community College. The pond covered an estimated three acres and had cool 60°F temperatures at one end and much warmer water at the other – perfect for many types of fish. The very next day, Neosho staff arrived with a trailer loaded with hundreds of fish reared for these type of youth events and stocked the pond. Hatchery managers David Hendrix and Roderick May headed up again on Friday to ensure everything looked good for the event.

On Saturday, anxious families started arriving during the seven o'clock hour, but the official start wasn't until eight. Urban

American Outdoors TV leaders Wayne Hubbard and Candice Price gave opening remarks and introduced sponsors and helpers, and then the fishing commenced. For the next four hours, families delighted in the wonderful weather and bountiful catch. A hotdog lunch concluded the event, and Neosho NFH staff was back on the road shortly afterward.

Next month, it happens all over again with the same group, this time across the state line into Missouri for another opportunity to reach a new group. The hope is for those to have a chance to experience the outdoors in a new and wholesome way. Service Director Dan Ashe is expected to attend as is Region 3 Director Tom Melius, plus more representatives from Neosho NFH and their Friends group. Engaging with the community and reaching out to create awareness and fun is just what we do!



USFWS Deputy Director Jim Kurth (far left) joined Wayne Hubbard (far right) of Urban American Outdoors and participants at the 10th annual Urban Kids Fishing Derby for a day of fishing and fun.

Credit: Courtesy of Urban American Outdoors



2015 Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory Chinook Salmon Tagging Season Completed

BY ALLEN LANE, GREEN BAY FWCO



This 44 foot automated tagging trailer is one of the 4 trailers run by the GLFTRL. The mass marking team has averaged 8500 fish/hour over the past 5 years of tagging Chinook salmon. Credit: Jim Webster, USFWS

Mass Marking Program provides an important tool for fisheries managers to better understand movement, survival, and reproduction of salmon and trout stocked into the Great Lakes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) program, administered from the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory, uses automated tagging systems contained in mobile trailers to rapidly tag and adipose fin clip hatchery reared salmon and trout. Coded wire tags are 1.1 mm long stainless steel tags with a 6-digit code etched on four sides to identify specific groups of fish, such as fish stocked at a particular location or a genetic strain. The removal of the adipose fin, the small fleshy fin between the dorsal and tail fin, makes stocked fish easily identifiable to anglers and field technicians when collecting biological data from fish at cleaning stations or spawning fish at weirs. Snouts are removed from tagged fish recovered from the sport catch, or during assessment surveys and weir returns, and are sent to the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory where the tags are removed, read under magnification, and the tag code is entered into a database. The tag recovery data is then provided to fisheries biologists for use in various studies.

Chinook salmon contribute to the multi-billion dollar sport-fishing and boating industry in the Great Lakes and serve an important ecological role as predators. State, tribal, and federal agencies tasked with managing this valuable fishery are benefiting from information provided by tag recoveries that is being used in ongoing Service-led analyses of tag recoveries investigating natural reproduction, movement patterns, and contribution of stocked Chinook salmon to the fishery in Lakes Michigan and Huron.

The Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory located at the Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office began marking and coded-wire tagging Chinook salmon in early March at Jake Wolf State Fish Hatchery in Topeka, Illinois, and finished its tagging season in early May at Thompson State Fish Hatchery near Manistique, Michigan. The lab's four tagging biologists worked with state partners to tag and mark fish at two Wisconsin state hatcheries, three Michigan state hatcheries, one state hatchery in Illinois, and one in Indiana.

This year, the lab clipped adipose fins and coded-wire-tagged more than 2.5 million Chinook salmon to be stocked in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron at a rate of 8,892 fish per hour. In addition, the lab marked another 411,761 Chinook salmon for stocking into Lake Superior with an adipose fin clip only. This brings the grand total up to 18.8 million Chinook salmon tagged and/or marked by the lab over the past five years.

The Great Lakes

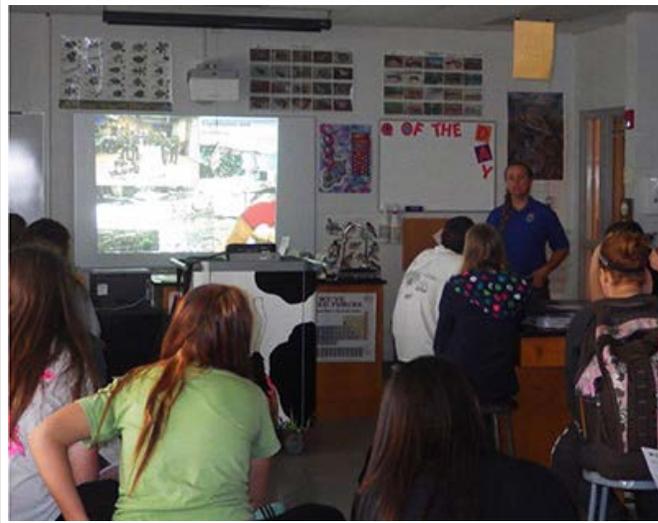


Chinook salmon are tagged and marked at 7 state hatcheries (yellow dots). Credit: Matt Kornis, USFWS



Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Bringing the “Big Muddy” to Rural Students

BY SARAH ETTINGER-DIETZEL, COLUMBIA FWCO



Sarah Ettinger-Dietzel introduces Dora High School students to the opportunities within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the overarching mission of the agency. Credit: Elizabeth Siepker

On May 8th, 2015, Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) had the opportunity to make a special trip to southern Missouri to speak with biology students at Dora High School. At the request of Elizabeth Siepker, Natural Sciences teacher, and Principle, Rick Luna, Sarah Ettinger-Dietzel eagerly accepted the invitation to interact with the students. Many students were on overload from final exams and the anticipation of summer vacation and the opportunity to learn about the Service's mission, Columbia FWCO projects and career opportunities was a welcome break for the students (and teachers) at Dora High School.

Sarah began with an introduction to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the overarching mission of the agency; specifically addressing Strategic Habitat Conservation and the partnerships needed to implement conservation efforts on the ground (and in the water). The Missouri River, a.k.a, the “Big Muddy,” was introduced to the students with a brief historical overview and discussion of challenges influencing the river today. Pictures of past and present Service employees hanging out with the most commonly found species in the

Missouri River while a brief overview was given on the each of the projects. One particular favorite for the students was a short video clip of invasive carp, specifically Silver Carp and the major challenges and issues associated with the species. This included the damage these fast growing animals can inflict on the environment as well as individual people. The video inspired discussion about invasive species and the damage that non-native animals can inflict on the environment (not to mention people). Students were amazed and even slightly horrified.

The presentation wrapped up with a section on careers with the Service. The take-away message was that even if the students were not overly passionate about the great outdoors, there were many different supporting roles within the Service that provide a critical foundation for on-the-ground (and in-the-water) conservation work. After the presentation, I broke out preserved specimens for the students to become acquainted with. The sturgeon species were a big hit with their dinosaur like appearance and so were infamous Northern Snake Head, getting props for its unusual ability to breathe out of water for hours.

With each class the students had multiple questions after each presentation and of course the “one that got away” fish stories. The students of Dora High School were attentive and exhibited a wonderful curiosity about our jobs with the Service, especially at Columbia FWCO. The students also showed a great deal of enthusiasm at the prospect of volunteering and working with conservation organizations in the future. It was a pleasure to provide an outreach opportunity with the students and teachers at Dora High School and it is the Columbia FWCO's hope there will be many more chances to continue providing educational opportunities in the form of these amazing outreach events.



High Bank Creek

Removal of Two Fish Passage Barriers in the Thornapple River Watershed

RICK WESTERHOF, GREEN BAY FWCO

High Bank Creek (HBC) is a tributary to the Thornapple River and flows north from Barry County to the confluence with Thornapple Lake in Michigan. In 2010, the Barry Conservation District (BCD) was funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Passage Program to remove two fish passage barriers on HBC. The removal of the two fish passage barriers, Lawrence Road culverts and Morgan Dam was completed and reconnected 31 miles of quality habitat for fish and aquatic species in the Thornapple River Watershed.

The Lawrence Road culvert on High Bank Creek was undersized, submerged and partially collapsed, thus preventing fish and aquatic species from passing upstream. The Morgan Dam was located just upstream of HBC and its confluence with Thornapple Lake. The dam was a former grist mill that operated into the 1940's. The dam's cement abutment was knocked into the creek in the mid-1960's to reduce the hazard caused by the collapsing structure. The impoundment drained and the mill race was filled during late 1960's or early 1970's. The dam remnants and higher velocities prevented passage of fish and other aquatic organisms.



Lawrence Road culvert outlet. Credit: USFWS



Lawrence Road culvert inlet. Credit: USFWS

A single span concrete bridge replaced the culverts at the Lawrence Road and High Bank Creek crossing. The new bridge is 130 feet in length and 34.4 feet wide, spanning the entire bankfull width and providing unrestricted fish passage. Milbocker & Sons was the prime contractor for the Lawrence Road project and was assisted by the Barry County Road Commission (BCRC) with erosion repairs after the bridge was constructed. Morgan Dam was removed, stream banks were restored and a rock ramp was built below the dam to provide fish passage. Michigan Department of Natural Resources Allegan Parks equipment crew completed the dam removal project. Project partners included BCD, MDNR, BCRC, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the landowner, Cogent Engineering, Crandall Bros. Construction and the Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office.



Morgan Dam on High Bank Creek, circa 1960. Credit: Courtesy Owner-Morgan Dam



Morgan Dam after removal on High Bank Creek. Credit: Barry Conservation District



Carterville FWCO and the Wild Crane Chase?

BY MATTHEW MANGAN, ECOLOGICAL SERVICES - MARION, ILLINOIS



Operation Migration members guide the whooping crane into the transport crate.
Credit: Matt Mangan, USFWS

coordinated effort by skilled professionals that ended in a successfully completed mission. The whooping crane captured was number 4-14 and was hatched in 2014. The decision to intervene and relocate the crane was based on a set of guidelines developed by the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership. To learn more about the WCEP, Operation Migration and to read a detailed account of our efforts visit the following links:

<http://www.bringbackthecranes.org/>
<http://www.operationmigration.org/>
<http://operationmigration.org/InTheField/2015/05/13/step-two-complete/>
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/fisheries/carterville/>

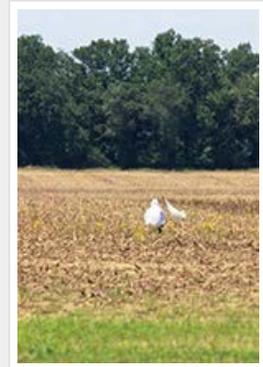


Carterville FWCO biologist Donovan Henry watches over the captured whooping crane just prior to transport. Credit: Matt Mangan, USFWS

So who do you call when you have a whooping crane that has gone astray and is on a remote island in the middle of a large river? Well, your local Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) of course! These personnel are not only good at squeezing fish, but they are also skilled boat drivers and great with logistics.

When I received a call that members of Operation Migration needed assistance to access Wabash Island in the middle of the Ohio River to capture a whooping crane, I immediately called Donovan Henry of Carterville FWCO. Donovan was eager to help, although we were both admittedly a little anxious, wondering how this was all going to unfold. Fortunately, we were able to access the site with ease and within a short time period, the Operation Migration members had captured the whooping crane (#4-14) and prepared the crane for transport.

Shortly thereafter I realized this was less of a chase and more of a



An Operation Migration member

coaxes the whooping crane towards the transport crate.
Credit: Matt Mangan, USFWS



Sturgeon Make a Big Splash at Detroit River Festival

BY JUSTIN CHIOTTI, ALPENA FWCO, WATERFORD, MI - SUBSTATION



Staff from the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office show students from University Prep Science and Math live adult lake sturgeon at Detroit River Sturgeon Day. Credit: USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and partner agencies have been conducting lake sturgeon research in the Detroit River for nearly two decades. During that time, over 400 adult lake sturgeon have been tagged to assess population trends, two artificial reefs have been constructed in the river to increase lost spawning habitat, and several spawning sites have been identified through the collection of eggs and larvae. On May 14th, several organizations attended the First Annual Detroit River Sturgeon Day held at Milliken State Park and Harbor along the Detroit River. The event was intended to educate students about the river and the giant fish swimming in its waters.

More than 200 students from University Prep Science and Math High School in Detroit attended the event where learning stations were setup to describe the history, habitat, life cycle, and health of lake sturgeon in the Detroit River and around the Great Lakes.

Students had an opportunity to view sturgeon larvae through a microscope, see some of the assessment gear used by biologists, and view live juvenile sturgeon.

Employees from the U.S. Geological Survey Great Lakes Science Center were on hand to describe the unique life history characteristics of



At the touch tank, Jim Boase with Alpena FWCO - Waterford, Michigan Substation encourages the students to feel the lake sturgeon's scutes. Credit: USFWS



At the life history learning station, staff from the U.S. Geological Survey talk about lake sturgeon assessments performed in the Detroit River. Credit: USFWS

Michigan Sea Grant operated a station where students learned about the reef construction process and habitat requirements of spawning lake sturgeon by placing rock material on a mat of a mock river. Staff from the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge described the history of the Detroit River, emphasizing habitat conditions which led to the decline of the species.

The Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation office operated the sturgeon recovery learning station where students learned about the historical status of lake sturgeon, what management agencies are doing to recover the species, and some of the factors impeding restoration. At this station students were able to hold crayfish and mudpuppies commonly found in the river.

The event culminated with a 300-gallon live lake sturgeon touch tank where students could get up close to adult lake sturgeon. Students were unaware that adult sturgeon were going to be a part of the event and the screams could be heard all along the Detroit River walk as they approached the fish. The students received a good background about lake sturgeon before they reached the touch tank, but nothing beats getting up close to the largest fish species in the Great Lakes. Students came away from the event with a better understanding of the history of the Detroit River, increased knowledge of the work organizations are doing to restore this species, and a story to tell for years to come.



Agencies partner together to teach students about the Detroit River and lake sturgeon at the First Annual Detroit River Sturgeon Day. Credit: USFWS

This event was held in partnership with the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, U.S. Geological Survey Great Lakes Science Center, Michigan Sea Grant, and Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.



Fish Tails

Articles submitted by field staff that do not appear as a feature within Fish Lines. These articles provide examples of the diverse work that is performed on behalf of aquatic resources.

Helping Fish "Breathe" On the Road

BY RANDY OBERMILLER, PENDILLS CREEK NFH

Each year, Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) stocks more than one million yearling lake trout into Lake Michigan. The yearlings are transported in special single purpose trucks built especially for fish transportation. Tanks constructed of stainless steel and divided into three compartments to house the fish are mounted on the trucks which are driven to the stocking sites. The hatchery uses oxygenated water when transporting the fish to keep them alive.

Supplemental oxygen is possibly the single most important ingredient to a successful transport. It is essential to maintain adequate oxygen in the water while transporting the fish. Pendills Creek NFH uses liquid oxygen cylinders filled with compressed oxygen that are mounted on the trucks.

Knowing how much oxygen has been used on a stocking trip and how much oxygen is left in the cylinder to be used on the next trip is of course very important. The hatchery recently purchased an electronic portable scale to accurately weigh the cylinders to determine if the oxygen tanks need to be refilled or have adequate oxygen left to make another stocking trip.

The scale weighs 100 pounds and has a 1000 pound tank weighing capacity. It has built in handles and wheels for easy mobility for use in multiple locations. The scale is lightweight and can be lifted onto the truck platform to quickly and easily weigh the oxygen tanks to determine if the tank should be refilled.

Having the electronic scale and the ability to know with confidence the oxygen tank will supply the fish with needed oxygen, is another tool in the driver's toolbox to a successful fish stocking trip.

Pendills Creek NFH was founded in 1951 and is located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula near Brimley, Michigan on Lake Superior. The facility rears yearling lake trout to be released into the Great Lakes as part of the Great lakes Restoration Program. Hatchery production includes just over 1,000,000 fish.

Green Bay FWCO Presents "Fisheries Assessments" to Elementary Students

BY ANTHONY RIETH, GREEN BAY FWCO

This spring, Green Bay FWCO Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection and Monitoring Science Technician Anthony Rieth had the opportunity to talk to 3rd graders at Brillion Elementary School in Brillion, Wisconsin.

The morning began with 42 bright eyed children and three educators eagerly waiting as they peered curiously at some of the fisheries equipment that were on display. The class had recently read a 3rd grade level book about Lake Trout and other fish species in Lake Superior; the presentation worked to tie together what the children learned in the book and the display equipment that was brought in.

The slide show started with an introduction to some of the gears fisheries professionals use to sample fish. Rieth provided a detailed explanation of fyke nets, gill nets, electrofishing, and ichthyoplankton light traps and how these gears are used to complete fisheries assessments. The talk transitioned into describing some of the different native and nonnative fish species that inhabit Lake Superior (and were talked about in the book) and finished up with floy tagging and PIT tagging demonstrations.

After the presentation, small groups of children were allowed view equipment and some preserved fish specimens up close. A sense of wonder and amazement filled the classroom. Rieth received a lot of questions from the children after the presentation, and even continued to ask questions as they headed for recess.



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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