

Inside Region 3

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Iowa Radio Station Fined \$10,000 For Littering Refuge

A Quad-Cities, Iowa, radio station was ordered to pay \$10,000.00 in fines and restitution by a federal court for sponsoring a party last summer that left trash strewn along a popular Mississippi River beach near Princeton, Iowa. The beach is part of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Connoisseur Communications, which owns radio station WXLP-FM, also known as 97X, was sentenced to pay \$9,800.00 restitution to the Fish and Wildlife Service and a \$200.00 fine after pleading guilty in U.S. District Court at Davenport, Iowa to a federal misdemeanor charge of littering public lands. The charge was based on a beer party and live broadcast held on the Refuge which attracted several hundred boats and about 500 participants who dropped beer cans, human waste and other trash along the beach.

Under a plea agreement, WXLP admitted to sponsoring the "97X Boat Patrol Party," which was announced over the stations airwaves. The station did so without acquiring the required permit from the Refuge.

The court also ordered the radio station to broadcast 10 public service announcements (PSA's) about environmental issues between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. by July 31. *Walt Kocal, DesMoines LE*



***Z-Hunt.** Nick Rowse of the Twin Cities Field Office (left) discusses zebra mussel search techniques with Byron Karns of the National Park Service during zebra mussel surveys on the St. Croix River June 12.*

-USFWS Photo by Scott Flaherty

Service Divers Join Zebra Mussel Task Force for St. Croix River Surveys

Biologists Nick Rowse of the Service's Twin Cities Field Office and Scott Yess, of LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office, are joining members of the National Park Service and Departments of Natural Resources from Minnesota and Wisconsin to continue monitoring the spread of unwanted zebra mussels on the St. Croix River. A task force dive team, that included Rowse, began the first of three week-long surveys of zebra mussels on the river near Stillwater, Minn. June 12. Rowse and two divers from the National Park Service, inspected a native mussel bed, bridge piers and close to 200 boats at

marinas near Stillwater during the first day with no trace of zebra mussels. Moving further downstream the next day, divers discovered small numbers of zebra mussels attached to native mussels near Hudson, Wis. Divers will inspect boats, bridge piers and native mussel beds on the lower St. Croix River south toward Prescott, Wis., where the St. Croix enters the Mississippi River. Followup surveys are planned for the weeks of August 14, and October 3, 2000. The federal and state agencies organized the Zebra Mussel Task Force in 1992 to monitor the spread of the un-

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Service Biologists Partners With Minnesota and Wisconsin to Help Preserve Endangered Higgin's Eye Pearly Mussel

The Service is joining biologist from the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources in an effort to restore populations of the Higgins' eye pearly mussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*) by promoting the reproduction of the endangered species in a laboratory setting.

Biologists recently collected gravid female Higgins' eye mussels from the St. Croix River and moved them to Genoa National Fish Hatchery near LaCrosse, Wis. Since mussels require host fish to reproduce, walleye

and largemouth bass were exposed to Higgin's eye glochidia in a laboratory setting. Glochidia, the fertilized eggs of freshwater mussels, attach to the gills of these host fish and, after a few weeks will drop off and settle to the bottom of holding tanks where they will hopefully grow into juvenile mussels.

In a similar manner, largemouth bass that were recently infected with glochidia from female Higgins' eye and will be transferred to holding cages in Lake Pepin where they will

grow. This technique was used in the past by commercial clambers to raise other species of mussels and hopefully it will also work for Higgins' eye.

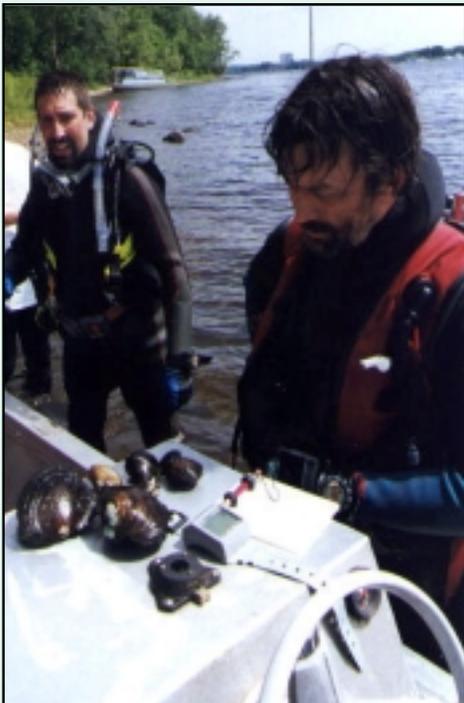
While this work centers on Higgin's eye pearlymussels from the St. Croix River, biologists will soon relocate adult Higgins' eye mussels from known beds in the upper Mississippi River to areas which have a low risk of infestation from zebra mussels in the future. *Reba Bicott-Denman, Twin Cities FO*

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Service Divers Conduct Zebra Mussel Surveys

wanted species in the lower part of the river, part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. In May, the Service's entered into an agreement with the National Park Service that provides for Service participation in scuba diving monitoring in the

river. In previous years, the task force employed contract divers. But, after evaluating the costs involved, members determined that the underwater surveys could be accomplished by divers from member agencies. Specifically, service staff will assist the task force with zebra mussel monitoring and conservation activities for two endangered mussels - the Higgins' eye pearly mussel and the winged mapleleaf. *Reba Bicott-Denman, Twin Cities FO*



-USFWS photo by Scott Fllaherty

Great Lakes Center for Aquatic Sciences Photo

Nick Rowse (right) and Byron Karnes examine a sampling of mussel shells pulled from a native mussel bed inspected by the team near Stillwater, Minn. Zebra mussels (photo right) infest native mussel beds, often attaching themselves to mussels.

Service Helps Kentucky Agencies Monitor Endangered Running Buffalo Clover

From May 22-24, Megan Sullivan of the Service's Reynoldsburg Field Office joined biologists from The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky, Kentucky Nature Preserves Commission, and Eastern Kentucky University to monitor the second largest reproducing population of running buffalo clover in the world.

The clover population is located on the Bluegrass Army Depot near Richmond, KY. The clover thrives in partially shaded areas that are disturbed by grazing or scouring.

The population at the Depot has been subjected to grazing pressures in the past, but in the last several years many of the cattle on the Depot's land have been removed. At many sites the clover is dying out due to competition with other species, especially coralberry and chickweed.

A full report on the status of the running buffalo clover population at the Bluegrass Army Depot will be available later this year. For a copy of the report, contact the Kentucky Nature Preserves Commission at (502) 573-2886. *Megan Sullivan, R3-Reynoldsburg FO*

Results of Pallid Sturgeon Study Presented at Missouri River Conference

Biologist Joanne Grady of the Service's Columbia Fishery Resources Office (FRO) presented the results of three years of pallid sturgeon research conducted on the Lower Missouri and Middle Mississippi Rivers at the fourth annual Missouri River Conference in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Project results indicate that pallid sturgeon populations in the Lower Missouri and Middle Mississippi Rivers have declined in the last 20 years while the rate of sturgeon hybridization has increased. Results will have an immediate impact on the biological consultations being conducted with the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) on these rivers.

The collection of hatchery raised fish supports the need for continued monitoring of federal and state hatchery origin fish and their habitat use within these systems.

The pallid sturgeon project was a multi-agency partnership which included the Columbia Fishery Resources Office (FRO), MICRA, USGS-BRD-Columbia Environmen-

tal Research Center, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Southern Illinois University, and the Missouri Department of Conservation LTRM Open River Field Station.

Six pallids were collected on the Lower Missouri River. Four of these fish were wild origin fish and two were hatchery origin fish. Seven hatchery origin pallids were collected in the Middle Mississippi River. Twenty hybrid sturgeon (pallid x shovelnose) were collected in the two rivers.

Pallid sturgeon numbers have decreased and hybrid fish numbers have increased since the last work done in this area in the late 1970s. Project reports will be available later this year. Partners include: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Southern Illinois University, USGS-BRD-Columbia Environmental Research Center and Missouri Department of Conservation-LTRM Open River Field Station. *Joanne Grady, R3-Columbia FRO*

Drawdown of Trempealeau Refuge Pool Benefits Shorebirds, Encourages Aquatic Plants

Thousands of shorebirds and hundreds of waterfowl made use of the mud flats and shallow water areas created by the drawdown of a 700 acre impoundment at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.

The drawdowns began in May, using the permanent pump station constructed through the Environmental Management Program. At least 23 shorebird species were observed, including red knot, Wilson's phalarope, Hudsonian and marbled

godwits, and hundreds of dunlin. Blue-winged teal, northern shovelers, and mallards congregated in the shallow water areas and hundreds of white pelicans loafed in the exposed stump fields.

The drawdown will continue through the summer in an attempt to increase aquatic vegetation growth by increasing light penetration and decreasing carp numbers. *Lisa McCurdy, R3-Trempealeau NWR*

Service Special Agents Train Illinois Conservation Police Recruits

Service Special Agents recently completed training for the third group of new Conservation Police Officers (CPO) hired by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Since fall 1999, Service agents have provided training to nearly 50 new recruits with Illinois DNR who have been recently hired by the State of Illinois through use of the federal COPS grants.

Special Agents Timothy Santel, Springfield, Ill., Jerry Sommers, Peoria, Ill., and Danny Burleson, St. Peters, Mo., conducted two day-long training sessions concerning federal laws and regulations, including the Endangered Species Act, Wildlife Refuge Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Lacey Act, and more.

In addition, the new officers received hands-on experience in species identifications as enforcement techniques.

Over the years, the Division of Law Enforcement has been providing training to the DNR officers at the Illinois State Police academy. As a result, the men and women hired soon become aware of the various federal laws and work closely with Service agents. Numerous joint investigations have resulted as a result of the close working relationship between the Illinois DNR law enforcement officers and Service special agents. *Timothy Santel, R3-Springfield LE*

Service Issues Biological Opinion on Operation of the 9-Foot Navigation Channel on the Upper Mississippi River

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) have completed a process under the Endangered Species Act known as formal Section 7 consultation to address threats to endangered species resulting from operation and maintenance of the 9-foot navigation channel and its associated locks and dams over the next 50 years.

The stretch of river covered by the biological opinion extends from Minneapolis, Minn., to Cairo, Ill. Within that area, the impacts of operating the lock and dam system, channel maintenance dredging and material disposal, and construction/maintenance of channel training structures on several endangered and threatened species were examined.

Threatened Species

These species included two endangered freshwater mussels, the Higgins' eye pearl mussel and the winged mapleleaf; two listed birds, including the threatened bald eagle and the endangered least tern; the endangered Indiana bat; the endangered pallid sturgeon; and one threatened plant, the decurrent false aster.

The Service concluded that the operation and maintenance of the 9-foot navigation channel is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the Higgins' eye pearl mussel and the pallid sturgeon.

Higgins' Eye Pearl Mussel

The Higgins' eye pearl mussel is jeopardized because of continued commercial barge transportation in the Upper Mississippi

River with vessels and equipment infested with zebra mussels. Zebra mussels are a nonindigenous aquatic species that has infested the Upper Mississippi River.

The "reasonable and prudent" alternative for the Higgins' eye pearl mussel includes development of a Higgins' Eye Pearl mussel Relocation Action Plan (i.e., relocate Higgins' eye to suitable zebra mussel-free, historically occupied habitats) and conducting a reconnaissance study to control zebra mussels in the Upper Mississippi River.

Pallid Sturgeon

The pallid sturgeon is jeopardized because of the expected continued degradation of its habitat. The reasonable and prudent alternative for the pallid sturgeon includes: implementation of a long-term habitat/life history study in the Middle Mississippi River.

The Service's biological opinion also concluded that incidental take is anticipated for the winged mapleleaf mussel and least tern. "Take" under the Endangered Species Act means harming, harassing, or killing an endangered or threatened animal. Incidental take is that which is incidental to but not the purpose of an activity. A biological opinion often allows some incidental take as long as measures are in place to minimize its impacts.

These "reasonable and prudent" measures to minimize the impact of incidental take for the winged mapleleaf mussel and least tern would allow the Corps to continue its navigation program with a lim-

ited amount of take, as long as overall conservation of the species is ensured. Some of the measures identified in this biological opinion are: evaluation of dredge material disposal practices and modification of channel training structures to enhance/protect least tern nesting and foraging habitat.

Bald Eagles

The Opinion also found that while the project may affect individual bald eagles and Indiana bats, the impacts will be offset by management actions proposed by the Corps or will be negligible and will not rise to the level of incidental take.

Adverse effects will result for the decurrent false aster, but the species will not be jeopardized. Because plants are considered private property, take is not prohibited if the project does not jeopardize the continued existence of the plant. *Lynn Lewis, R3-GEO2*

Non-game Bird Nesting at Squaw Creek NWR

Nesting efforts by non-game birds at Squaw Creek NWR have been about two weeks earlier than normal. Drought conditions have limited the distribution of birds and has resulted in the concentration of nesting efforts. A total of 88 pied-billed grebe nests have been located in the 80 acre Snow Goose Pool - one nest per acre. An additional 31 pied-billed nests in three other pools have been found. Least bittern and common moorhens are now beginning to nest and searching will continue through June.

Ron Bell, R3-Squaw Creek NWR

Accomplishment Reports Received

The following Accomplishment Reports were processed by the Accomplishment Reporting System June 12, 2000. Accomplishment reports received after that date will appear in the next issue of Inside Region 3.

1. **Water Gardening: Wet, Wild and Wonderful at Green Point Learning Center**
Becky Goche, R3-Shiawassee NWR
2. **Service Divers Join Zebra Mussel Task Force for St. Croix Surveys**
Reba Bicott-Denman, R3-Twin Cities FO
3. **Service Partners With Minnesota and Wisconsin to Preserve Higgin's Eye Pearly Mussel**
Reba Bicott-Denman, R3-Twin Cities FO
4. **Planned Drawdown of Mississippi River's Pool 8 Postponed By Poor Water Conditions**
Reba Bicott-Denman, R3-Twin Cities FO
5. **Drawdown of Trempealeau Refuge Pool Benefits Shorebirds, Encourages Aquatic Plants**
Lisa McCurdy, R3-Trempealeau NWR
6. **Non-game Bird Nesting at Squaw Creek NWR**
Ron Bell, R3-Squaw Creek NWR
7. **Agents Train Illinois Conservation Police Officer Recruits**
Timothy Santel, R3-Springfield LE
8. **LEWS News Will Inform Public About Lake Erie Watersnake Issues**
Megan Sullivan, R3-Reynoldsburg FO
9. **School Groups Flock to Seney NWR**
Marianne Kronk, R3-Seney NWR
10. **Refuge Partners With Missouri School District's Careers Program**
Charles Marshall, R3-Squaw Creek NWR
11. **Offsite Exhibit**
Charles Marshall, R3-Squaw Creek NWR
12. **Elk River Students Explore Oak Savanna at Sherburne NWR**
Nancy Haugen, R3-Sherburne NWR
13. **Website Created for Public Comment on Patoka Boat Launch EA**
Julie Morin, R3-Federal Aid
14. **Squaw Creek Ranger Supports Boy Scout Career Program**
Charles Marshall, R3-Squaw Creek NWR
15. **Horicon NWR Celebrates Hosts Fishing Expedition**
Molly Stoddard, R3-Horicon NWR
16. **Wapello District's Prescribed Fire Program Yields 2,200 Acres Burned**
Kathleen Maycroft, R3-Mark Twain NWR-Wapello Dist
17. **Horicon NWR Celebrates Earth Day With Boardwalk Dedication**
Molly Stoddard, R3-Horicon NWR
18. **Columbia FRO Presents Pallid Sturgeon Study Results at Missouri River Conference**
Joanne Grady, R3-Columbia FRO
19. **Service Assists in Monitoring Endangered Running Buffalo Clover**
Megan Sullivan, R3-Reynoldsburg FO
20. **Environment Day at Youngstown Air Force Reserve Base**
Bill Kurey, R3-Reynoldsburg FO
21. **Lescalleet Receives Firearms Instructor Training**
Cynthia Samples, R3-UMRNW&FR-Complex HQ
22. **Birders Descend on Hamden Slough NWR During Fergus Falls Birding Festival**
Michael Murphy, R3-Hamden Slough NWR
23. **Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds Attracts Hundreds!**
Betsy Beneke, R3-Tamarac NWR
24. **Seney NWR Workshop Shows Teachers About Frogs as Bio-Indicators at Workshop at Seney NWR**
Marianne Kronk, R3-Seney NWR
25. **Mark Twain NWR, Annada District - Moist Soil Management**
Rick Cantu, R3-Mark Twain NWR, Annada Dist

- 26. Shiawassee NWR Marks IMBD With Bicycles and Binoculars**
Becky Goche, R3-Shiawassee NWR
- 27. Service Issues Biological Opinion on Operation of the 9-Foot Channel on the Upper Mississippi River**
Lynn Lewis, R3-GEO2
- 28. Union Slough NWR Dedicates New Environmental Education Site and Boardwalk**
Rod Hansen, R3-Union Slough NWR
- 29. Horicon Marsh Bird Festival at Horicon NWR**
Molly Stoddard, R3-Horicon NWR
- 30. International Migratory Bird Day at PWLC**
Terrie Eidal, R3-Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC
- 31. IMBD 2000 at the Como Zoo**
Ed moyer, R3-Minnesota Valley NWR
- 32. Record Acres Burned During Litchfield WMD 2000 Fire Season**
Todd luke, R3-Litchfield WMD
- 33. Refuge Exhibit at the Fillmore Mississippi Heritage Conference**
Cynthia Samples, R3-UMRNW&FR-Complex HQ
- 34. Wood Duck Production Dips Slightly at Squaw Creek NWR**
Ron Bell, R3-Squaw Creek NWR
- 35. Federal Aid Programs Highlighted in Special Issue of Inside Region 3**
Julie Morin, R3-Federal Aid
- 36. Bass Pro Working with Federal Aid in Promoting Programs**
Julie Morin, R3-Federal Aid

Inside Region 3



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