



Making Waves

Volume 12, Issue 4 April 2014



A Chilling Start to Field Season

By Jenna Merry

The La Crosse FWCO field season began on March 24th when Nick Bloomfield, Katie Jardine, and I traveled to suburban Chicago. Here we set gill nets in several areas of the Des Plaines River for the first of many regional Asian carp monitoring efforts this year.

With a high temperature in the upper 20s on the first day of sampling, our fingers did not appreciate handling the cold, wet nets, but we were still very glad to finally be out in the field after a long winter.



Periods of snowfall were interrupted by brief openings of sunshine, which made for an

interesting atmosphere as our boat cut through thin ice that covered prime backwater sampling sites.

Over the course of two days, we set 1,500 yards of gill net, catching plenty of buffalo and common carp but no Asian carp. Since the start of sampling efforts here three years ago, no bighead or silver carp have been caught in the Des Plaines River above its confluence with the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

However, three grass carp were captured here last April during similar efforts.

In addition to monitoring Asian carp on the Des Plaines River, Katie and I also spent time aboard a commercial fishing boat assisting with Asian carp netting and remov-



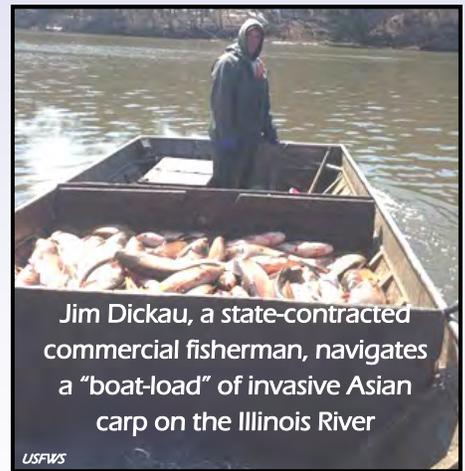
Deckhand Nick Dickau sets a gill net from a commercial vessel

Asian carp from the Illinois Waterway System over a period of about 20 weeks during 2014. It was a fun to watch these professionals at work and we learned a thing or two while helping pick several hundred Asian carp, buffalo, and common carp out of 2,000 yards of net that were set each day.

Due to overnight rain, Des Plaines River sampling came to an abrupt end on the third day of our trip. Therefore, while Katie assisted with Asian carp removal aboard the

larger commercial vessel for a second day, Nick and I joined in the effort with a much smaller boat.

Despite our size handicap and a gill net picker (namely, me) who was not as experienced as a commercial deckhand, we managed to capture nearly 1,000 pounds of Asian carp from the Illinois River in Peacock Slough near Morris (IL). These were largely silver carp, but included bighead carp and grass carp too.



Jim Dickau, a state-contracted commercial fisherman, navigates a "boat-load" of invasive Asian carp on the Illinois River

Being part of the fight against Asian carp is a great way to kick off the field season and our early start in March foreshadows the intensity of our planned sampling schedule in the coming year.

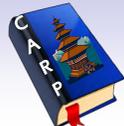
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Fishers & Farmers Update

By Heidi Keuler

Peno Creek Cooperative Partnership Field Day



The Fishers & Farmers Partnership is assisting the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) with engaging more landowners in the Peno Creek Watershed (Pike County, MO). Because watershed landowners have expressed interest in cover crops, MDC helped establish cover crop plots on both state (Ranacker Conservation Area) and private lands (John Scherder's Farm). These plots, planted during the fall of 2013, demonstrate three different mixes of cover crops that could be used on area farms. MDC has also assisted farmers with a Peno Creek landowner advisory council that consists of about five farm families.

On March 26, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Pike County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and MDC hosted a Peno Creek Cooperative Partnership Field Day. The Field Day highlighted new conservation efforts in this high-quality watershed and provided producers with an opportunity to learn about innovative practices that conserve natural resources while improving the farmers' bottom line.

Twenty landowners learned about watershed dynamics, benefits of cover crops, impacts of crop management practices on run-off and infiltration, and cost-share opportunities. With the help of a stream table and rain simulator, farmers were also able to visually make a connection between crops, cropping systems, and impacts to streams.

Speakers included Chris Williamson and David Vance (MDC), Lucas Brass and Andrea King (NRCS), and John Scherder (local farmer/landowner). Attendees heard presentations in the morning and then walked through demonstration cover crop projects in the afternoon.



One of the highlights was a visit with John Scherder (red jacket) to listen to his experiences with cover crops and to see how cover crops and managed grazing are benefiting his farm, his family, and Peno Creek

The day was a great success and highlighted many possibilities in this high-quality watershed. Fishers & Farmers hopes to take what was shared in the Peno Creek Watershed and apply these lessons learned across the Upper Mississippi River Basin.

Fishers & Farmers thanks the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for its support in helping to sponsor workshops, training, demonstration projects, and a land owner advisory council in the Peno Creek Watershed to advance conservation practices that improve aquatic habitat in northeastern Missouri.

Partnership Welcomes New Co-Chairs

The Fishers & Farmers Partnership (FFP) warmly welcomes Steve Sodeman and Jack Lauer as their new Co-Chairs!

Sodeman is a farmer, independent crop consultant, and former Director on the Minnesota Corn Growers Association Board. He has been an integral part of FFP Steering Committee for the past two years and really helps partners understand farm issues. As Steve has repeatedly said, "All farmers love fish. Fish are truly a great connector of people with diverse interests and goals ... Our job today is to get farmer-producers to be more conscientious of their impact. We must not blame anyone. We must respect each other. We must educate each other. We must be patient, but determined. Keep the FISH in our focus."



Lauer, who has been on the FFP Steering Committee for five years, is a Regional Fisheries Supervisor for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. He brings a positive, but also realistic approach to getting fish habitat projects on the ground. Jack says, "Our continuous goal is to strengthen the Partnership that nurtures a greater sense of belonging to an agriculture network of citizens who can champion flourishing farms and smart conservation practices which promotes healthier streams and fish habitat. The sooner we take action and demonstrate with landowners the link between land-use practices and natural resources, seeking solutions from landowners, the sooner we will all realize the potential of supporting a common thread of connecting land and water resources that will be sustainable for generations. Developing that relationship and working together towards common goals will significantly grow the Partnership."

It is this fisher-farmer relationship between Steve and Jack and the rest of the Partnership that makes Fishers & Farmers unique and successful in bringing landowner-led fish habitat projects to the Upper Mississippi River Basin.



Editor's Note by Mark Steingraeber

Making Waves will henceforth be published every other month, beginning with the May-June 2014 issue.



The Asian Carp Chronicle - Upper Mississippi Update A Month of Success

By Kyle Mosel

La Crosse FWCO crews efficiently deployed gear throughout much of April to monitor movements of Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi River.



Kyle Mosel (left) and Lockmaster Nick Schnerre (right) prepare to deploy a receiver in Lock 16

We started by placing a total of 38 acoustic receivers in lock chambers, backwaters, and on navigation buoys over a range that extended 232 river miles from Pool 11 to Pool 19. Additional receivers will be placed in the lower reaches of several tributaries once river levels drop safely below flood stage. These will be monitored throughout the year and downloaded on a regular basis.

Based on experience gleaned last year from commercial fisherman and other river biologists, we were also able to efficiently capture a total of 34 Asian carp (as well as seventy paddlefish, one muskellunge, and one white bass x striped bass hybrid) in Pool 17 and Pool 18 during a challenging three days of netting. Twenty-three of the Asian carp, ranging in length from 31 to 53 inches and up to 67 pounds in weight, were surgically implanted with acoustic transmitters and released in the pool where they were captured. The remaining Asian carp, including one bighead carp that weighed 72 pounds, were sacrificed to collect otoliths (i.e., ear bones) for microchemistry and age analyses. This brings the total number of invasive Asian carp that have been tagged with acoustic transmitters and released in the UMR by the La Crosse FWCO and its surveillance partners to fifty fish.

In the upcoming weeks, we plan to deploy more receivers from Pool 11 to Pool 5 and implant more fish with transmitters. This has been a great start to our field season. Special thanks to Neal Gillespie from the U.S. Geological Survey who helped us during a week of rain, sleet, wind, and cold weather.



Neal Gillespie cradles a bighead carp captured in UMR Pool 17

No Reprieve for Convicts

By Mark Steingraeber



Although given several weeks of free room and board at Marineland, a hobby fish retail store in Onalaska (WI), no one in the tri-state area (IA, MN, WI) was willing to accept any of the nearly 100 convict cichlids this store has graciously sheltered this year for two owners who could no longer care for all these fish.

A popular aquarium fish native to portions of Central America, convict cichlids reach sexual maturity in 4 to 6 months, when males and females can be distinguished. Because sex is unknown before this, if two or more small convicts are purchased and maintained in a single aquarium, uninformed owners may soon find themselves with many more mouths to feed than expected.



Marineland of Onalaska recently accepted a total of 97 unwanted convict cichlids (53 pictured above) from just two pet owners. Though offered for resale, they were not purchased and were later euthanized.



Convict cichlids are susceptible to a parasitic and commonly fatal infectious disease of warmwater fish termed "Ich". The release of convict cichlids in the wild is believed responsible, in part, for the extermination of native speckled dace in Lake Mead (NV) and also threatens native fish in other parts of the United States.

Area pet owners who can no longer care for their finned friends are encouraged to bring them to Marineland where the fish are accepted and may be offered for resale. Fish that are not resold are eventual-

ly given to the La Crosse FWCO and humanely euthanized.

What Others Say ...



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ANNUAL KIDS FISHING CLINIC & DERBY - FREE



GENOA NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY

5 5631 State Hwy 35, Genoa WI 54632

Saturday, May 17, 2014 8:45 AM TO 1:00 PM

For Children Ages 5 years to 12 years old



Fishing poles available as needed ... Lunch will be provided

The following is the itinerary for the Annual Fishing Clinic & Derby for children 5 to 12 years old at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery, Saturday, May 17, 2014

Clinic Stations

	Station 1	Station 2	Station 3	Station 4
8:45 to 9:00 am Registration	Fish Cleaning	Fish Health	Fish Behavior and ID	Jig Making
9:00am to 9:15am	" "	" " "	" "	"
9:15am to 9:30am	" "	" " "	" "	"
9:30 am to 9:45 am	" "	" " "	" "	"
9:45 am to 10:00 am	" "	" " "	" "	"

This event is limited to the **first 250 children** that register on the day of the event.

Children will rotate every 15 minutes (9:00 to 10:00 am) through the clinic stations.

Recreational fishing will follow (10:00 am to 12:00 pm) at Hatchery Pond 6.

Fishing pole "loaners" will be available, as needed.

Lunch will be provided at noon for the children, volunteers and employees.

Everyone will be dismissed at approximately 1:00 pm

Participants will be provided bait, **NO outside bait will be allowed.**

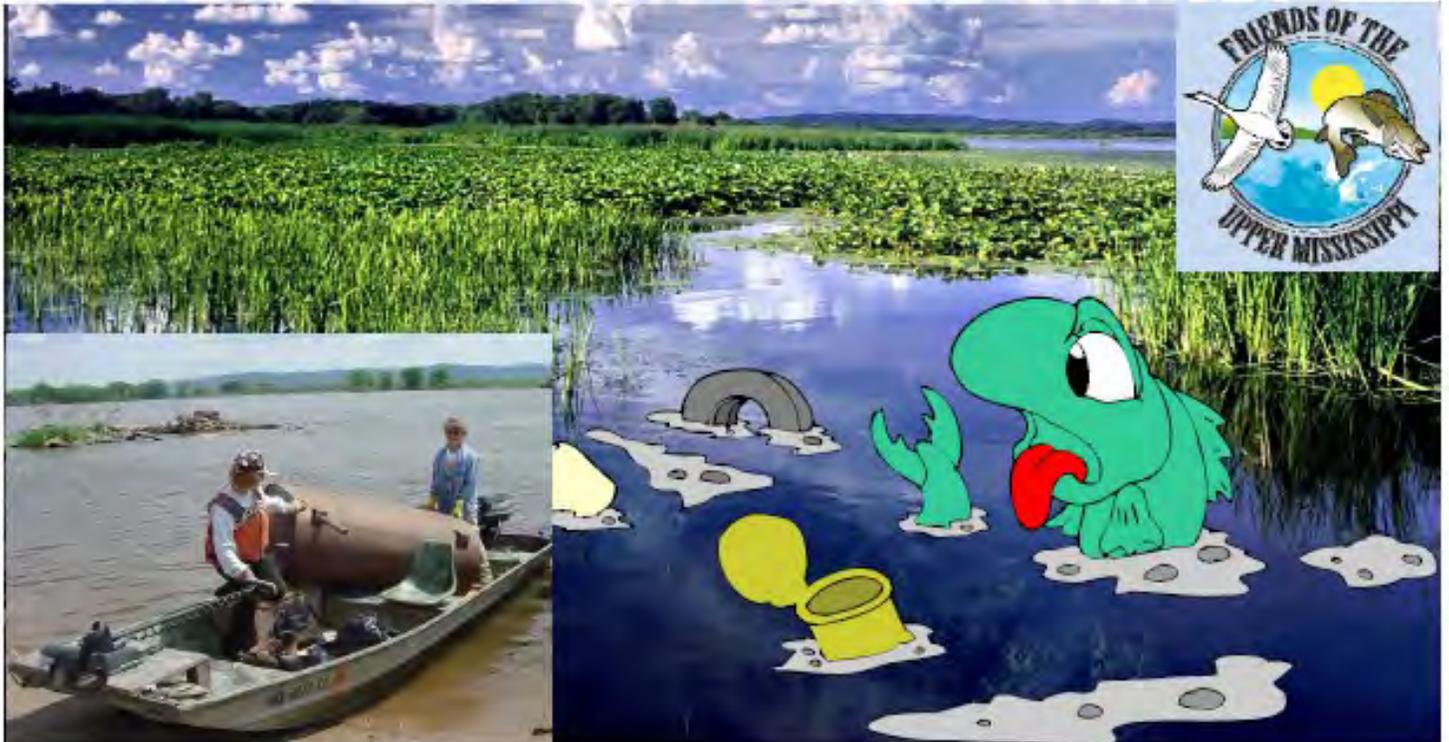
Due to safety concerns and space limitations, no artificial lures, fly fishing and/or treble hooks will be allowed at this event.

Children must attend the Fishing Clinic to attend the Fishing Derby



For more information call: 608-689-2605

MISSISSIPPI RIVER POOL 8 RIVER CLEANUP



Saturday May 31, 2014

8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Wildcat Landing

Brownsville, MN



Friends of the Upper Mississippi will work with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, & Boathouse owners (CARP).

Your help is greatly appreciated!

Please wear old clothes, a long-sleeved shirt, work gloves, boots/chest waders (if available), life jacket, bring a boat (optional), lunch, water, sunscreen/bug spray.

Sponsored by Friends of the Upper Mississippi - Questions? 507-894-4022