

Great Plains Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office News

November / December 2020



Image: Jason Kral monitoring acoustic telemetry equipment while tracking pallid sturgeon on the Missouri River.

GPFWCO Changes

“New” Leadership

After almost 3 ½ years with a vacant Project Leader position at Great Plains, and after an advertisement and interviews... Dan James was selected to lead the FWCO. He started November 8th. It was a good run of the empty chair photo from our previous reports, but now that chair is full!



The Team is Back Together Again

After a temporary move to supervision by Gavins NFH, Jennifer and Jason are back with the Great Plains FWCO and will remain physically located in Yankton. Great Plains and Gavins will continue to work together to share resources to complete our shared mission efficiently and economically.

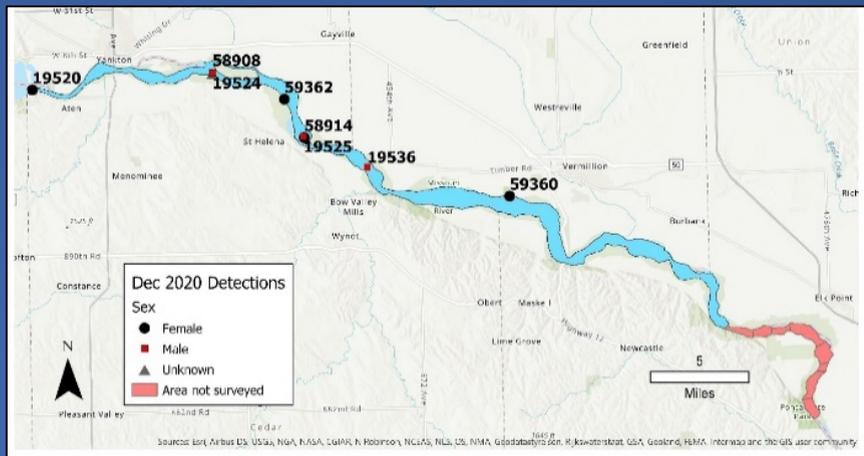
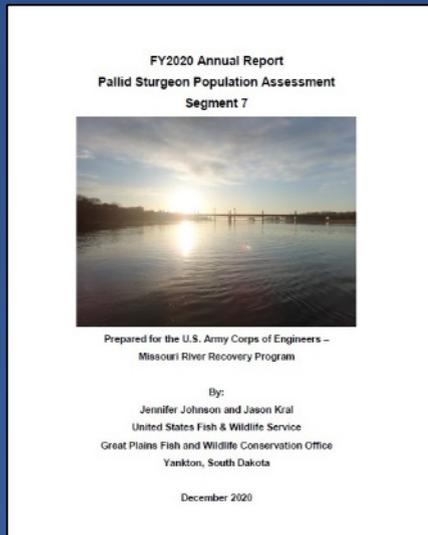


Pallid Sturgeon Monitoring Program

Completed and submitted the *FY20 Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment Annual Report for Segment 7* to the USACE.

Jason and Jennifer completed telemetry sweeps of their section of the Missouri River. They located 10 fish in November and 8 in December.

Jason has been learning to accurately assess the reproductive status of pallid sturgeon by honing his ultrasound skills and through visual inspection of eggs.



Pallid Sturgeon Recovery

THE PALLID STURGEON RECOVERY PROGRAM



Pallid Sturgeon Technical Team

Landon continued to represent FWS as a technical expert for the Missouri River Recovery Program.

Recovery coordination

Landon participated in weekly coordination calls with the Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Coordinator to discuss issues related to pallid sturgeon.

Adaptive Management

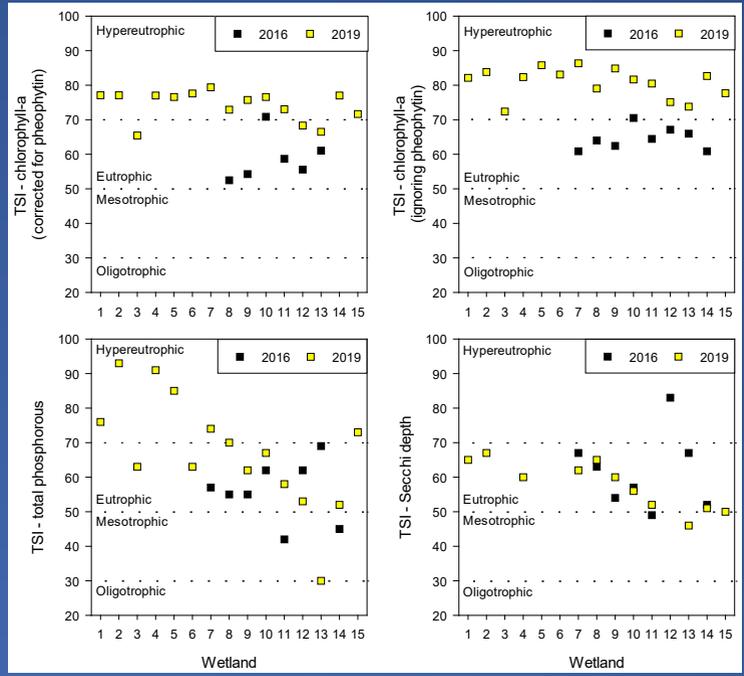
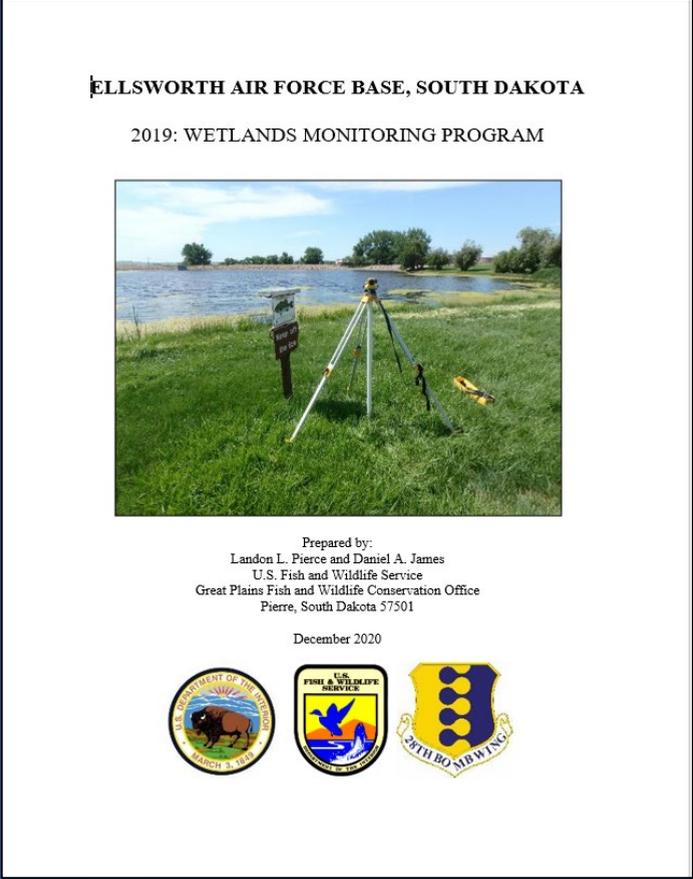
- Landon, Jennifer, and Jason participated in the Missouri River Pallid Sturgeon Fall Science webinars.
- Landon participated in the USACE Independent Science Advisory Panel's webinar to discuss questions and concerns related to the pallid sturgeon monitoring program.
- Jennifer is drafting a progress update for the Pallid Sturgeon Middle Basin Workgroup.
- Landon reviewed and provided comments on the USACE Adaptive Management Compliance Report Executive Summary.
- Jennifer and Landon participated on a conference call with state and federal partners to plan experimental stockings of 1- and 5-day post-hatch pallid sturgeon in the lower Missouri River in 2021 to improve our understanding of early life ecology and habitat use.

Sikes Act

Completed Final Report:

Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota: 2019 Wetlands Monitoring Program

The report summarizes the monitoring results of 15 wetlands on Ellsworth AFB. We assessed the physical, chemical, and biological value of each wetland to assist Ellsworth AFB with management of their natural resources.

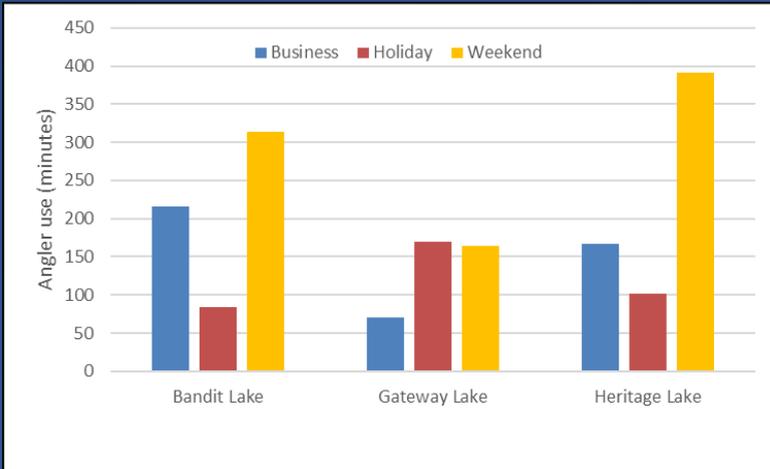


Sikes Act

Remote creel survey project

Jason Kral (GPFWCO) and Jason Marsh (MTFWCO) processed ~25,000 more images from the 'census' data set.

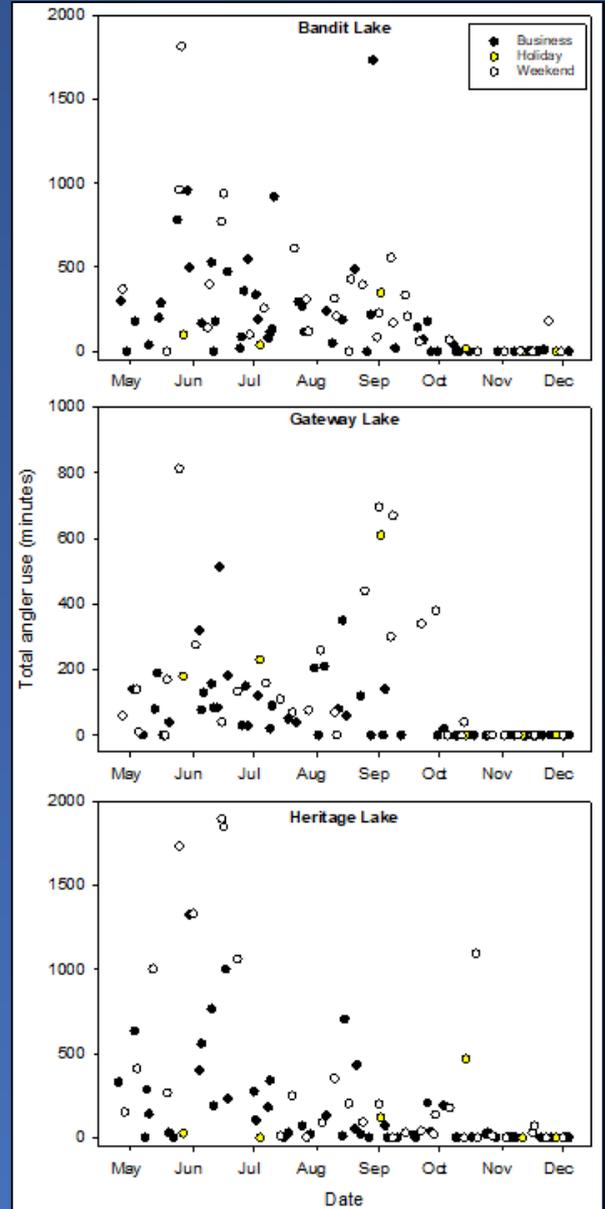
Landon summarized data and conducted preliminary data analyses.



Of the 3 fishing lakes on Ellsworth AFB, fishing use was higher at Bandit and Heritage lakes, and higher on weekends.



Shore, kayak, canoe, and small boat anglers use the fishing lakes.



Angler activity was greatest from June to September. Fishing pressure greatly dropped after September.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Asian Carp

The Dozer Trawl electrofishing system was completed by Midwest Lake Pond and Lake Management. The boat was delivered to us on November 25th. We also purchased other supplies to complete the gantry build in 2021.

Jennifer attended a hydroacoustic workgroup meeting to discuss “Hydroacoustic surveys in large rivers: A mixed sampling design for evaluating Asian carp populations in the greater Mississippi Basin”.



AIS Partnerships

Jennifer, Landon, Jason, and Dan attended the virtual 100th Meridian Missouri River Basin Team Invasive Species Meeting.

Jennifer accepted the invitation to lead the “Silver Carp Movement and Behavior Project” for the Missouri River Basin Asian Carp Tech Committee.

Missouri River Basin Team



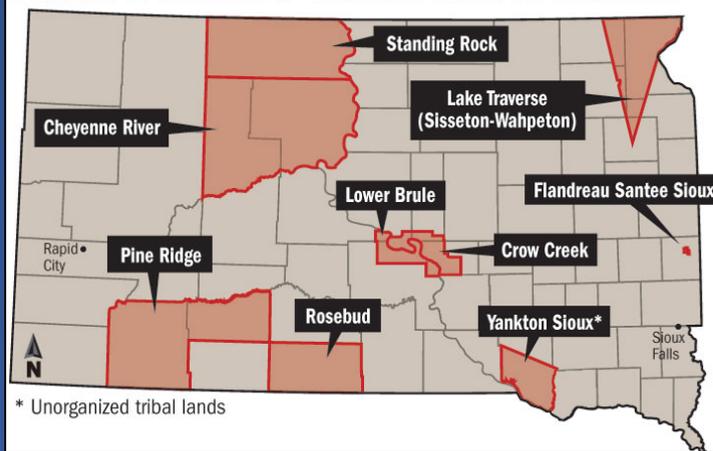
The Missouri River Basin Team is comprised of 100th Meridian Initiative partners primarily in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri.

Tribal

Tribal Stocking Requests

We initiated contact for fish stocking requests to 9 Tribes in our 3-state area. During this process, we send summaries of previous stockings and answer any questions each Tribe may have. Following this process, we relay the requests to Gavins and DC Booth NFHs.

South Dakota's Indian Reservations



National Fish Hatchery Prioritization Project

Priority Propagation Framework Analyses

Fish Management Team (FMT) Update

December 3, 2020: Teams Meeting



American shad

Dan James

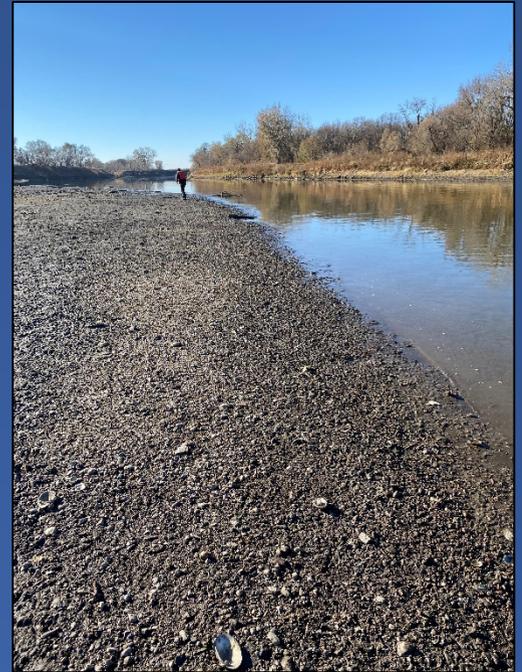
Great Plains FWCO, Pierre, SD

Dan presented his report to the Fish Management Team (FMT) via Teams. The report was well received and after filling one information gap, the report will be finalized.

Gavins Field Assistance

Mussel brood stock collections

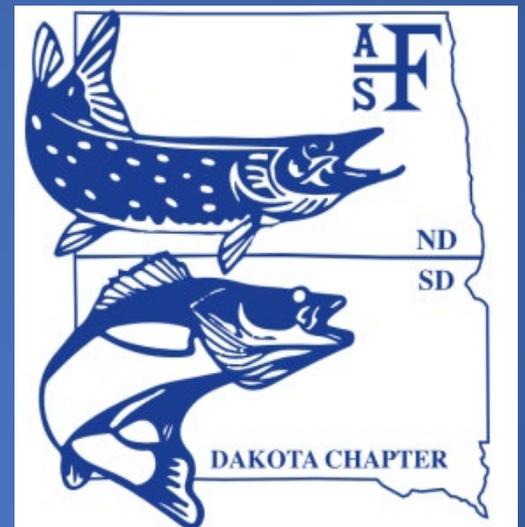
Jason assisted Gavins NFH in their efforts to collect mussels for brood stock specimens.



Professional Development

Dakota Chapter AFS

Dan served in his role as co-chair of the Continuing Education Committee by working to develop a membership survey to better understand the needs of the chapter.



Training



- Emotional Intelligence: Exploring the Self through Flexing, Transcending, and Striking (Jennifer)
- Defensive Driving (Jennifer)
- Travel Card (Jason)
- MS Access 2016: Finding and Organizing Data (Jason)
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month Panel Discussion (Dan)
- Balancing Home and Work Life (Dan)



Great Plains FWCO



Supervisory Biologist
Dan James



Fish & Wildlife Biologist
Landon Pierce



Fish Biologist
Jennifer Johnson



Fish Biologist
Jason Kral