

**USFWS STAFF**

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# Interior Region 5

## Missouri River FWCO

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA



JUNE 2020

### RECOVERY

#### Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment Update

The Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment crew was only able to sample one week in July due to coronavirus concerns. Three random bends were sampled twice in segment 4 below the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. The purpose of this sampling is to capture age-0 sturgeon and other small bodied fish including sicklefin and sturgeon chub. No age-0 sturgeon were collected. There are still 9 random bends that remain to be sampled with the otter trawl this season.

Ecological Services reached out asking for a map of pallid sturgeon capture locations of Recovery Priority Management Area 2 or the area surrounding the Yellowstone River Confluence. To fill their request, a 1 km kernel density map (Figure 1) was created using all capture locations from 1998 through 2019.



Inserting a PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tag into a pallid sturgeon.



Bow trawling for juvenile sturgeon on Missouri River.

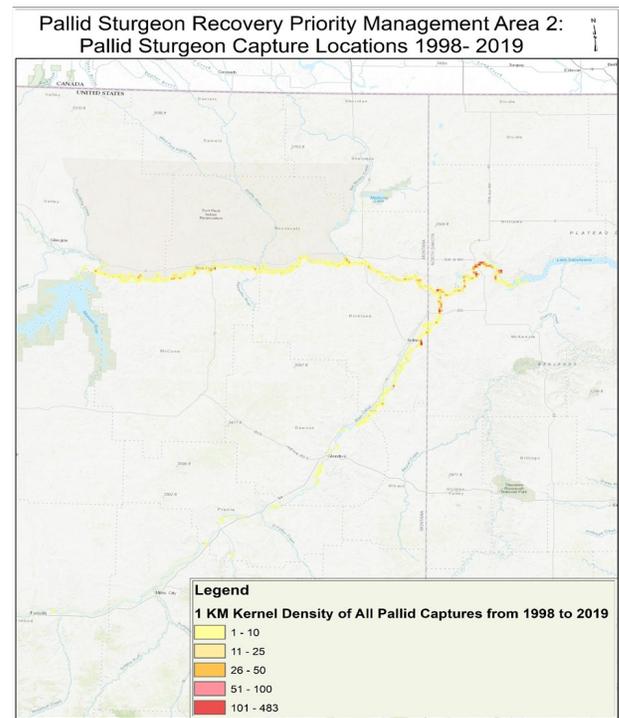


Figure 1. Heat map location map of pallid sturgeon captures in Recovery Priority Area #2.

## PARTNERSHIPS

### Sikes Act

- Apoidea vane trapping continued on both GFAFB and MAFB.
- The camera trap survey for MAFB was completed.
- Weed monitoring surveys on GFAFB are in progress and nearing completion.
- Monarch and milkweed monitoring began in plots on GFAFB and will continue through September.



Bee samples being preserved for identification.

Kelsey Loverink and Melissa Martin conducted 3 monarch butterfly survey activities (developed by the Monarch Joint Venture). These surveys were conducted on Grand Forks Air Force Base in July and consists of 3 activities. One activity is conducted along 500 m<sup>2</sup> transects where adult monarch butterflies are identified, counted, and behavior recorded. Within each transect, another activity involves sampling 100-5 m<sup>2</sup> subplots for milkweed and blooming plant nectar sources. Each of the plants are tallied and identified to species. Along these transects, a 3rd activity includes searching for the presence and abundance of monarch eggs and larvae on milkweed.



Weed mapping location on Grand Forks AFB.

- Butterfly and moth surveys have begun and will also continue through September.
- Data management and development of reports is ongoing.

Melissa Martin, Kelsey Loverink & Kathryn Padgett provided additional capability to the Ecological Services Field Office in Pierre, SD to assist in conducting Regal Fritillary surveys which included capturing, marking, collecting a leg for genetic testing, and releasing Regals. Activities also included nectar source line transects, general butterfly identification. This work along with a Species Status Assessment (SSA) will help determine the status of Regal Fritillaries in South Dakota. Melissa brought back her experiences and provided training to the other staff on protocols and procedures for conducting Regal Surveys. This has been truly an example of cross pollination between programs.

Melissa Martin assisted with the 6th annual Little Wings on the Prairie Butterfly Festival at Oahe Downstream Recreation Area north of Ft. Pierre, SD on Saturday, July 18. She helped bring awareness of the importance of butterflies, bees, and nectar plants to the community. This year the festival was a modified drive-thru version due to COVID-19. Neither snow, nor rain, nor virus stays this courier!

## RESTORATION

### Native Species Restoration

Progress continued on the Little Missouri Watershed fish passage assessment report and is nearing completion.

### Missouri River Basin Asian Carp eDNA

A cross Region, multiple partner effort to collect eDNA associated with the Asian Carp monitoring efforts in the Upper Missouri River were postponed due to COVID-19. This work was schedule to take place in August but progress was made to further develop sampling guidelines and develop communications between the partners. An adhoc Asian Carp genetics team has been developed to further communicate information and collaborative efforts.

## STAFFING UPDATES

### New Staff

**Kathryn Padgett and Matthew Gardner** began their season in July for the MRFWCO as Biological Science Technicians . We are happy to have the extra help and appreciate their sense of adventure during these uncertain times.

**Kathryn (Kat)** came here from the coast of North Carolina where she has have lived for 19 years. She graduated with a BS in Marine Biology from UNC Wilmington, where I specialized in marine conservation. She will be working primarily with the ES side of the office but gaining experience wherever she is needed.

**Matthew (Matt)** was born and raised in Northeastern Ohio where he grew up hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping which was the inspiration behind his passion for our natural resources, fish, and wildlife. He graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor's degree in Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife with a specialization in Fish and Wildlife Science. He is excited to work with the fisheries team here on the pallid sturgeon recovery project, as well as the fish passage project and gain knowledge and skills in this field.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Sikes Act work at Minot and Grand Forks AFB

Electrofishing, mussel surveys and benthic sampling of the Turtle River were rescheduled due to severe weather in the region. These surveys are scheduled for August as conditions improve.

- Potential pallid sturgeon trawling and sampling in Segment 4 of the Missouri River